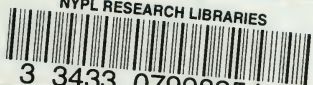


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FIFTY SHORT SERMONS BY
T. DE WITT TALMAGE

MAY TALMAGE

FIFTY SHORT SERMONS
BY
T. DE WITT TALMAGE

COMPILED BY HIS DAUGHTER
MAY TALMAGE

THE
FIFTY
SHORT
SERMONS

OF
T. DE WITT
TALMAGE

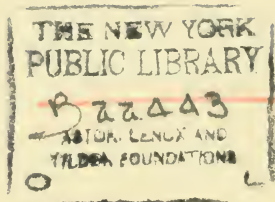
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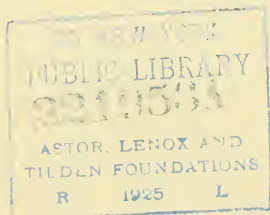
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FIFTY SHORT SERMONS BY T. DE WITT TALMAGE. II

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I

The Three Crosses

Just outside of Jerusalem is a swell of ground toward which a crowd are ascending; for it is the day of execution. What a mighty assemblage! The three persons to be executed are already there. Some of the spectators are vile of lip and bloated of cheek. Some look up with revenge, hardly able to keep their hands off the sufferers. Some tear their own hair in frenzy of grief. Some stand in silent horror. Some break out into uncontrollable weeping. Some clap their hands in delight that the offenders are to be punished at last. The soldiers with drawn swords drive back the mob, which presses hard. There is fear that the proceedings may be interrupted.

Three crosses in a row. Three trees just planted, yet bearing fruit—the one at the right bearing poison, and the one at the left bitter aloes, the one in the middle apples of love. Norway pine, and tropical orange, and Lebanon cedar would not make so strange a grove as this orchard of Calvary. Stand and give a look at the three crosses.

Just look at the cross on the right. Its victim dies scoffing. More awful than his physical anguish is his scorn and hatred of him on the middle cross. This wretched man turns halfway around on the spikes to hiss

at the One in the middle. If the scoffer could get one hand loose and he were within reach he would smite the middle sufferer on the face. He hates him with a perfect hatred. I think he wishes he were down on the ground that he might spear him. He envies the mechanics who with their nails have nailed him fast. Amid the settling darkness and louder than the crash of the rocks, hear him jeer, "If thou be the Son of God save thyself and us." It was in some such hate that Voltaire in his death hour, because he thought he saw Christ in his bedroom, got up on his elbow and cried out: "Crush that wretch!" What had the middle cross done to arouse up this right-hand cross? Nothing. Oh, the enmity of the natural heart against Christ! On this right-hand cross I see typified the unbelief of the world. Men say: "Back with him from the heart; I will not let him take my sins, if he will die, let him die for himself, not for me." There has always been war between the right-hand cross and the middle cross; and wherever there is an unbelieving heart, there the fight goes on.

Look up into that disturbed countenance of the sufferer and see what a ghastly thing it is to reject Christ. Behold in that awful face, in that pitiful look, in that unblest hour, the stings of the sinner's departure. What a plunge into darkness! Standing high upon the cross on the top of the hill, so that all the world may look at him, he says: "Here I go out of a miserable life into a wretched eternity! Listen to the crash of the fall, all ye ages!" So Hobbs, dying after he had seventy years in which to prepare for eternity, said: "Were I master of all the world I would give it all to live one day longer." Sir Francis Newport, hovering over the brink, cried out: "Wretch that I am, whither shall I fly from this breast? What will become of me? Oh, that I were to lie upon the fire that never is quenched a thousand years to purchase

the favor of God and to be reconciled to him again! Oh, eternity! Oh, eternity! Who can discover the abyss of eternity! Who can paraphrase these words: 'Forever and forever.' " That right-hand cross—thousands have perished on it in the worst of agonies. For what is physical pain compared to remorse at the last that life has been wasted and only a fleeting moment stands between the soul and its everlasting overthrow?

That right-hand cross, with its long beam, overshadows all the earth. It is planted in the heart of the race. When will the time come when the Spirit of God shall with its ax hew down that right-hand cross until it shall fall at the foot of that middle cross, and unbelief, the railing malefactor of the world shall perish from all our hearts?

"If thou be the Son of God." Was there any "if" about it? Tell me, thou star that in robe of light did run to point out his birthplace. Tell me, thou sea that didst put thy hand over thy lip when he bade thee be still. Tell me, thou sun in mid-heaven, who for him didst pull down over thy face thy veil of darkness. Tell me, ye lepers who were cleansed, ye dead who were raised, is he the Son of God? Aye! Aye! responds the universe. The flowers breathe it; the stars chime it; the redeemed celebrate it; the angels rise on their thrones to announce it. And yet on that miserable malefactor's "if" how many shall be wrecked for all eternity! That little "if" has enough venom in its sting to cause the death of a soul. No "if" about it. I know it. *Ecce Deus!* I feel it thoroughly—through every muscle of the body and through every faculty of my mind and through every energy of my soul. Living I will preach it; dying I will pillow my head upon its consolations—Jesus, the God.

Away then from this right-hand cross. The red berries of the forest are apt to be poisonous and around this

tree of carnage grow the red poisonous berries of which many have tasted and died. I can see no use for this right-hand cross, except it be used as a lever with which to upturn the unbelief of the world.

Here from the right-hand cross I go to the left-hand cross. Pass clear to the other side. That victim also twists himself upon the nails to look at the center cross—yet not to scoff. It is to worship. He, too, would like to get his hand loose—not to smite but to deliver the sufferer of the middle cross. Gather around this left-hand cross, O ye people! Be not afraid. Bitter herbs are sometimes a tonic for the body and the bitter aloes that grow on this tree shall give strength and life to thy soul.

This left-hand cross is a repenting cross. As men who have been nearly drowned tell us that in one moment while they were under the water their whole life passed before them, so I suppose in one moment the dying malefactor thought over all his past life. He says, "I am a guilty wretch; I deserve this! There is no need of blaspheming Christ, for he has done me no wrong, and yet I cannot die so. The tortures of my body are outdone by the tortures of my soul. The past is a scene of misdoing. The present a crucifixion." Turning to his companion in sorrow, the One on the middle cross, he cries, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Only just remember me."

Likewise must we repent. We have all been guilty of the mightiest felony of the universe, for we have robbed God—robbed him of our time, robbed him of our services. Suppose you send a man West as an agent of your firm and every month you pay him his salary, and at the end of ten years you find out that he has been serving another firm but taking your salary; would you not at once condemn him as dishonest? God sent us into this world to serve him. He has given us wages all the time. Yet how

many of us have been serving another master? When a man is convicted of treason he is brought out; a regiment surrounds him and the command is given: "Attention, company! Take aim! Fire!" And the man falls with a hundred bullets through his heart. There comes a time in a man's history when the Lord calls up the troop of his iniquities and at God's command they pour into him a concentrated volley of torture. You say: "I don't feel myself to be a sinner." That may be. Walk along by the cliffs and you see sunlight and flowers at the mouth of the cave; but take a torch and go in and before you have gone far you see the flashing eye of a wild beast, or hear the hiss of a serpent. So the heart seems in the sunlight of worldliness; but as I wave the torch of God's truth, and go down into the deep cavern of the heart—alas! for the bristling horrors and the rattling fangs. Have you ever noticed the climax in this passage of Scripture: "The heart is deceitful"? That seems enough. But the passage goes on further and says: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." If we could see the true condition of the unpardoned before God, what wringing of hands there would be. What a thousand-voiced shriek of supplication and despair! You are a sinner; I speak not to the person who sits next you, but you. You are a sinner. May the Lord Almighty by his grace help us to repent of our sins while repentance is possible.

This left-hand cross was a believing cross. There was no guesswork in that prayer: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." No "if" in that supplication. The left-hand cross flung itself at the foot of the middle cross, expecting mercy. Faith is only just opening the hand to take what Christ offers us.

This left-hand cross was a pardoned cross. The crosses were only two or three yards apart. It did not take long

for Christ to hear, and Jesus said: "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise," as much as to say: "I see you there; do not worry. I will not only bear my cross, but help you with yours."

Forthwith the left-hand cross becomes the abode of contentment. The pillow of the malefactor, soaked in blood, becomes like the crimson upholstery of a king's couch. When the body became still and the surgeons feeling the pulse said one to another: "He is dead," the last mark of pain had gone from his face. Peace had smoothed his forehead. Peace closed his eyes. Peace closed his lips. Now you see why there were two transverse pieces on the cross, for it has become a ladder into the skies. That dying head is easy which has under it the promise: "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

I have shown you the right-hand cross and the left-hand cross; now come to the middle cross. We have stood at the one, and found it yielded poison. We have stood at the other and found it yielded bitter aloes. Come now to the middle cross, and shake down apples of love. Uncover your head. You never saw so tender a scene as this. You may have seen father and mother die, or companion or child die, but never so affecting a scene as this. The railing thief looked from one way and saw only the right side of Christ's face. The penitent thief looked from the other way and saw the left side of Christ's face. But in the full blaze of Gospel light you see Christ's full face. It was a suffering cross. If the weapons of torture had gone only through the fatty portions of the body, the torture would not have been so great, but they went through the hands and feet and temples—the most sensitive portions. It was not only the spear that went into his side, but the sins of all the race—a thousand spears—plunge after plunge, deeper and deeper and

deeper until the silence and composure that before characterized him gave way to a groan through which rumbled the sorrows of time and the woes of eternity. Human hate had done its worst and hell had hurled its sharpest javelin and devils had vented their hottest rage, when with every nerve of his body in torture and every fiber of his heart in excruciation, he cried out: "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" It was a vicarious cross; the right-hand cross suffered for itself, the left-hand cross for itself; but the middle cross for you.

When the Swiss were many years ago contending against their enemies, they saw these enemies arrayed in solid phalanx and knew not how to break their ranks; but one of the heroes, Arnold von Winkelried, rushed out in front of his regiment and shouted: "Make way for liberty!" The weapons of the enemy were plunged into his heart, but while they were slaying him, their ranks were broken, and through that gap in the ranks the Swiss dashed to victory. Christ saw all the powers of darkness assailing men. He cried out: "Make way for the redemption of the world." All the weapons of infernal wrath struck him, but as they struck him our race marched free.

To the middle cross look, that your souls may live. I showed you the right-hand cross in order that you might see what an awful thing it is to be unbelieving. I showed you the left-hand cross that you might see what it is to repent. Now I show you the middle cross that you may see what Christ has done to save your soul. Poets have sung its praise, sculptors have attempted to commemorate it in marble. Martyrs have clung to it in fire, and Christians, dying quietly in their beds, have leaned their heads against it. This hour may all our souls embrace it with an ecstasy of affection. Lay hold of that cross! Everything else will fail you. Without a strong grip on that you

perish. Put your hand on that and you are safe, though the world swing from beneath your feet.

Oh, that I might engrave on your souls ineffaceably three crosses, so that in your dreams at night you may see on the hill back of Jerusalem the three spectacles. The right-hand cross showing unbelief, dying without Christ; the left-hand, showing what it is to be pardoned, while the central cross pours upon your soul the sunburst of heaven as it says: "By all these wounds I plead for your heart." And while you look the right-hand cross will fade out of sight, and then the left will be gone; and nothing will remain but the middle cross, and even that, in your dream, will begin to change, until it becomes a throne; and the worn face of Christ will become radiant with gladness; and instead of the mad mob at the foot of the cross will be a worshipful multitude kneeling, and you and I will be among them.

Throw down at the foot of that middle cross sin, sorrow, life, death—everything. We are slaves; Christ gives deliverance to the captive. We are thirsty; Christ is the river of salvation to slake our thirst. We are hungry; Jesus says: "I am the bread of life." We are condemned to die; Christ says: "Save that man from going down into the pit; I am the ransom." We are tossed on the sea of trouble; Jesus comes over it, saying: "It is I. Be not afraid." We are in darkness; Jesus says: "I am the bright and morning star." We are sick; Jesus is the "balm of Gilead." We are dead; hear the shrouds rend and the grave hillocks heave as he cries: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." We want justification; "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We want to exercise faith; "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

I want to get from under Condemnation; "There is now therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." The cross—he carried it. The flames of hell—he suffered them. The shame—he endured it. The crown—he won it.

II

Twelve Entrances

I command the regiment of God to reign in their thoughts and halt, and before they pitch their tents for the night, take one good look at the gates of the great city. "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls."

There have been many fine gateways, but Christ set his hand to the work and for the upper city swung a gate such as no mortal eye ever gazed on untouched by inspiration. With a nail of his own cross he cut into its wonderful traceries stories of past suffering and of gladness to come. Against the gateway on the one side dash all the splendor of earthly beauty. Against this gate on the other side beat the surges of eternal glory. Oh, the gate! the gate! It strikes an infinite charm through every one that passes it. One step this side of that gate, and we are paupers. One step the other side of that gate and we are kings. The pilgrim of earth going through sees in the one huge pearl all his earthly tears in crystal. Oh, gate of light! Oh, gate of pearl! Oh, gate of heaven, for our weary souls at last swing open! "I saw the twelve gates and they were twelve pearls."

Count the number of the gates. Imperial parks and lordly manors are apt to have one expensive gateway, and the others are ordinary, but look around at these heavenly entrances and count them—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve. Hear it, all the earth and all the heavens. Twelve gates! I admit this is rather hard on sharp sectarianisms. If a Pres-

byterian is bigoted, he brings his Westminster Assembly Catechism, and he makes a gateway out of that and he says to the world, "You go through there or stay out." If a Methodist is bigoted, he plants two posts and he says, "Now you crowd in between those two posts or stay out." Or perhaps an Episcopalian may say, "Here is a liturgy out of which I mean to make a gate; go through it or stay out." Or a Baptist may say, "Here is a water gate; you go through that or you must stay out." And so in all our churches and in all denominations there are men who make one gate for themselves and then demand that the whole world go through it. I abhor this contractedness in religious views. O small-souled man, when did God give you the contract for making gates? I tell you plainly I will not go in at that gate. I will go in at any one of the twelve gates I choose. Here is a man who says, "I can more easily and more closely approach God through a prayer book." I say, "My brother, then use the prayer book." Here is a man who says, "I believe there is only one mode of baptism and that is immersion." Then I say, "Let me plunge you." Anyhow I say, away with the gate of rough panel and rotten posts and rusted latch when there are twelve gates and they are twelve pearls. The fact is that a great many of the churches in this day are being doctinated to death. They have been trying to find out all about God's decrees and they want to know who are elected to be saved and who are reprobated to be lost, and they keep on discussing that subject when there are millions of souls who need to have the truth put straight at them. They sit counting the number of teeth in the jawbone with which Samson slew the Philistines. They sit on the beach and see a vessel going to pieces in the offing, and instead of getting into a boat and pulling away for the wreck they are discussing the different styles of oarlocks.

God intended us to know some things and intended us not to know others. I have heard scores of sermons explanatory of God's decrees, but came away more perplexed than when I went. The only result of such discussion is a big fog. Here are two truths which are to conquer the world: Man, a sinner; Christ, a Savior. Any man who adopts these two theories in his religious belief shall have my right hand in warm grip of Christian brotherhood.

A man comes down to a river in time of freshet. He wants to get across. He has to swim. What does he do? The first thing is to put off his heavy apparel and drop everything he has in his hands. He must go empty-handed if he is going to the other bank. And I tell you when we have come down to the River of Death, and find it swift and raging, we will have to put off all our sectarianism and lay down our cumbrous creed and empty-handed put out for the other shore.

"What," say you, "would you resolve all the Christian Church into one kind of church? Would you make all Christendom worship the same way by the same forms?" Oh, no! You might as well decide that all people shall eat the same kind of food without reference to appetite or wear the same kind of apparel without reference to the shape of their body. Your ancestry, your temperament, your surroundings will decide whether you go to this or that church, and adopt this or that faith. One church will best get one man into heaven and another church another man. I do not care which one of the gates you go through if you only go through one of the twelve gates that Jesus lifted. Looking out at the one hundred and forty and four thousand you cannot tell at what gate they came in. One Lord. One faith. One baptism. One glassy sea. One doxology. One triumph. One heaven. "Luther, how did you get in?" "I came through

the third gate." "Cranmer, how did you get in?" "I came through the eighth gate." "Hugh McKail, the martyr, how did you get in?" "I came through the twelfth gate." Glory to God, twelve gates, but one heaven!

Notice the points of the compass toward which these gates look. They are not on one side or on two sides or on three sides, but on four sides. This is no fancy of mine, but a distinct statement. On the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; on the east, three gates; on the west, three gates. What does that mean? Why, it means that all nationalities are included, and it does not make any difference from what quarter of the earth a man comes up; if his heart is right there is a gate open before him. On the north, three gates. That means mercy for Lapland and Siberia and Norway and Sweden and the regions of the Arctic. On the south, three gates. That means pardon for Hindustan and Algiers and Ethiopia and the Antarctic. On the east, three gates. That means salvation for China and Mongolia and Japan and Borneo and the Philippine Islands. On the west, three gates. That means redemption for America and the races of the Pacific. It does not make any difference how dark-skinned or how pale-faced men may be, they will find a gate right before them. Those plucked bananas under a tropical sun. These shot across Russian snows behind reindeer. From Mexican plateau, from Roman Campagna, from Chinese tea-field, from Holland dyke, from Scotch Highlands, they come, they come! Heaven is not a monopoly for a few precious souls. It is not a Windsor Castle for royal families. It is not a small town with small population; but John saw it and he noticed that an angel was measuring it, and he measured it this way and then he measured it that, and whichever way he measured it it was fifteen hundred miles; so that Babylon and Thebes and Tyre and Nineveh and St. Petersburg and

Canton and Peking and Paris and London and New York and all the dead cities of the past and all the living cities of the present added together would not equal the census of that great metropolis. Walking along the streets of our cities you can, by the contour of the dress or of the face, guess where a man came from. You say, "That is a Frenchman; that is a Norwegian; that is an American." But the gates that gather in the righteous will bring them in irrespective of nationality.

III

Jordanic Passage

Washington crossed the Delaware when crossing was pronounced impossible, but he did it by boat. Xerxes crossed the Hellespont with a million men but he did it by an extemporized bridge. The Israelites crossed the Red Sea, but the Jordanic crossing was different from all these. It was without loss of human life. It was without the loss of so much as a linchpin. It seemed as if the waters were driven away. As the priests who were the vanguard of the army came down and touched the brim of the river the waters fled away and then it was as if all the dampness had been sponged off, as though the road by a towel had been wiped dry. The streets of Jerusalem were not more dry than the depths of that river.

Standing by the affrighted and fugitive river of Jordan we learn that obstacles touched vanish. The priests came down at the head of the Israelitish host, and they did not wade in chin deep or chest deep, or knee deep or ankle deep; they with the foot just touched the rim of the water and Jordan fled. So it is with a great many of the obstacles in your life and mine. They are tremendous in the distance, but when we touch them with our courage they are gone.

You see some duty in the future you do not want to perform. "Oh," you say, "I haven't the physical courage for it, I haven't faith in God for it, I can't do it, I am not competent for the circumstance!" Go right on and do your whole duty, and the obstacles will be gone. The waters touched vanish.

Looking off upon this strange crossing of the river you learn the completeness of everything that God does. When the Jordan was bidden to halt, you would have supposed it would have overflowed and devastated the country. That would have been a natural law. But when God built an invisible dam across the Jordan so it halted, he built at the same time an invisible dam on either side the Jordan, so that the context says the waters stood up—they reared in their march. It was a complete miracle, complete in every respect, just like God's work, always complete.

Oh! the completeness of everything that God does. Does he build a universe, it is a perfect clock running ever since it was wound up. The stars in the dome striking midnight, and the sun with brazen tongue telling the hour of noon. The wildest comet has on it the chain of a law it cannot break. The thistledown that flies before the school-boy's breath is controlled by the same law that controls a whole universe. It is a complete universe. No astronomer has ever suggested an amendment.

Does God make a Bible, it is a complete Bible. Standing amid its dreadful and delightful truths, you seem to be in the midst of an orchestra, where the wailing over sin, and the shoutings over pardon, and the martial strains of victory, sound like the anthem of eternity. It seems like an ocean of truth on which God walks, sometimes in darkness of prophecy, and sometimes in the splendor with which he walked on Galilee, apostle answering to prophet, Paul to Isaiah. Revelation to Genesis. A complete book. It is the kiss of God on the soul of lost man.

Does God provide a Savior, he is a complete Savior. God, man, divinity, humanity. A mighty Savior and yet a sympathetic Savior. All heaven adoring him, yet on earth called "this fellow." Angels folding their wings over their faces and bowing before him holy, holy, holy,

yet called on earth a sot and a blasphemer. Rocked in a boat on Gennesaret, and yet he it is that undirks the lightning from the storm cloud and dismasts Lebanon of its cedars. Holding us in his arms when we take the last look at our dead; sitting beside us at the tombstone, and while we plant roses there, he plants consolations in our soul. Every chapter a stalk. Every paragraph a stem. Every word a rose. A complete Bible. A complete Savior. Everything he does is complete.

Again as I look off upon the wonderful scene I learn that between us and everything bright and beautiful and useful and prosperous there is a river of difficulty that we must cross.

That which costs nothing is worth nothing. God puts everything valuable a little out of our reach, that we may struggle for it. For the same reason he puts gold deep down in the mine, and pearls deep down in the sea, to make us dig and dive. We all understand that in worldly things. Would God we understood it in religious things.

There was a river of difficulty between Shakespeare, the boy, holding the horses at the London Theatre for a sixpence and Shakespeare, the world's dramatist, winning the applause of all nations by his incomparable tragedies. There was a river of difficulty between Benjamin Franklin, with a loaf of bread under his arm, trudging along the street of Philadelphia, and Benjamin Franklin, the philosopher, outside of Boston, playing kite with the thunder storm. An indolent man was cured of his indolence by looking out of his window at night into another window and seeing a man turning off one sheet of writing paper after another until almost daybreak. Who was it that wrote until the morning? It was Walter Scott. Who was it that looked at him from the opposite window? Lockhart, afterwards his illustrious biographer.

It is push and struggle and drive. There are moun-

tains to scale, there are rivers to ford. And there has been struggle for everybody that gained anything for themselves or gained anything for the Church, or gained anything for the world.

What is true when we are well and in great prosperity we imagine may be true in the last hour of life. How many there are who are afraid of the Jordan of death! It is the Jordan in the distance that is so terrible. When you come up to it it will depart. That is going to be true in all histories, not one exception, of those who are the children of God.

To some it seems a dreadful river to cross, but here is the Christian coming. It is time for departure. He has crossed all the other rivers and here is the River of Death. His priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, with bruised feet goes right ahead of him and he comes to the water and his breath gets shorter and shorter, and his last breath is gone as he touches the wave. But then all the billows toss their plumes and begin to sing: "Oh! death, where is thy sting? Oh! grave, where is thy victory? God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more sea, and there shall be no more death."

Oh, how much comfort there is in this subject for all the bereft! You see our departed are not swamped in the waters, are not submerged. They have crossed over. That is all. The Israelites were just as certainly alive on the eastern bank of the Jordan as they were on the western bank of the Jordan, and our departed Christian friends are just as certainly alive now as they were before they crossed the River of Death. The respiration is easier. The sight is keener. All their aches and ailments left this side. Crossed over. Not sick, not dead, not obliterated, not blotted out, but crossed over. Ought I not congratulate you, the bereft, at the thought that your friends are safe in heaven?

There is one old hymn that rings through my soul
to-day consecrated by many a dying lip, words we tried
to sing at my father's departure, but all the voices broke
down at the close of the first verse, broke in emotion:

On Jordan's stormy bank I stand
And cast a wistful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land
Where my possessions lie.

IV

The Coming Sermon

We hear a great deal in these days about the coming man, and the coming woman, and the coming time. Some one ought to tell us of the coming sermon. It is a simple fact that everybody knows that the sermon of to-day does not reach the world. Of our own city, as moral a city as there is on the planet—not one hundred thousand come into the churches; and of the one hundred thousand supposed to be in the churches, I do not think twenty thousand carry away practical help and inspiration. The sermon of to-day carries along with it the deadwood of all ages. Hundreds of years ago it was decided what a sermon ought to be and it is the attempt of many theological seminaries and doctors of divinity to hew the modern pulpit utterances into the same old proportions. Booksellers will tell you they dispose of a hundred histories, a hundred novels, a hundred poems to one book of sermons. What is the matter? Some say religion is wearing out when it is wearing in. Some say there never was an age when there were so many Christians, or so many friends of Christianity, as in this age—our age—which has to others a hundred to one. What is the matter, then? It is simply because our sermon of to-day is not suited to the age. It is the canal boat in an age of locomotive and electric telegraph. The sermon will have to be shaken out of the old grooves, or it will not be heard and it will not be read. Before the world is converted the sermon will have to be converted. You might as well go into the modern Sedan or Gettysburg with bows and arrows instead of rifles and bombshells and parks of artillery as to

expect to conquer this world for God by the old style of sermonology. Jonathan Edwards preached the sermons most adapted to the age in which he lived; but if those sermons were preached now they would divide an audience into two classes—those sound asleep and those wanting to go home. But there is a coming sermon; who will preach it I have no idea; in what part of the earth it will be born I have no idea; in which denomination of Christians it will be delivered I cannot guess. That coming sermon may be born in the country meeting house on the banks of the St. Lawrence or the Oregon or the Ohio or the Tombigbee or the Alabama. The person who will deliver it may this moment lie in a cradle under the shadow of the Sierra Nevadas, or in a New England farmhouse, or amid the rice fields of Southern savannas; or this moment there may be some young man in some of our theological seminaries, in the junior or middle or senior class shaping that weapon of power; or there may be coming some new baptism of the Holy Ghost on the churches so that some of us who now stand on the watch towers of Zion waking to the realization of our present inefficiency may preach it ourselves. That coming sermon may not be fifty years off, and let us pray God that its arrival may be hastened.

The coming sermon will be full of a living Christ in contradistinction to didactic technicalities. A sermon may be full of Christ though hardly mentioning his name, and a sermon may be empty of Christ while every sentence is repetitious of his titles.

The world wants a living Christ, not a Christ standing at the head of a formal system of theology, but a Christ who means pardon and sympathy and condolence and brotherhood and life and heaven. A poor man's Christ; an overworked man's Christ; an invalid's Christ; a farmer's Christ; a merchant's Christ; and an every man's

Christ. A symmetrical and fine-worded system of theology is well enough for theological classes, but it has no more business in a pulpit than have the technical phrases of an anatomist or a physiologist in the sick-room of a patient. The human race wants help, immediate and world-uplifting, and it will come through a sermon in which Christ shall walk right down into the immortal soul and take everlasting possession of it, filling it as full of light as is this noonday firmament.

The sermon of the future will not deal with men in the now threadbare illustrations of Jesus Christ. In that coming sermon there will be instances of vicarious sacrifice taken right out of every-day life, for there is not a day somebody is not dying for others. As the physician, saving his diphtheritic patient by sacrificing his own life; as the ship captain, going down with his vessel while he is getting his passengers into the lifeboat; as the fireman, consuming in the burning building while he is taking a child out of a fourth-story window; vicarious suffering. The world is full of it.

In the coming sermon of the Christian Church there will be illustrations that will bring to mind the ghastlier sacrifice of him who, on the cross, fought our battles, and wept our griefs and endured our struggles and died our death. A German sculptor made an image of Christ, and he asked his little child, five years old, who it was, and she said: "That must be some very great man." The sculptor was displeased with the criticism, so he got another block of marble and chiseled away on it two or three years, and then he brought his little child, eight or nine years of age, and he said to her: "Who do you think that is?" She said: "That must be the One who took little children in his arms and blessed them." Then the sculptor was satisfied. Oh, my friends, what the world wants is not a cold Christ, not an intellectual Christ, not

a severely magisterial Christ; but a loving Christ, spreading out his arms of sympathy to press the whole world to his loving heart.

The coming sermon will be a short sermon. Condensation is demanded by the age in which we live. In other days men got all their information from the pulpit; people would sit and listen two and a half hours to a religious discourse and "seventeenthly" would still find them fresh. But what was a necessity then is a superfluity now. Congregations are full of knowledge from books, from newspapers, from rapid and continuous intercommunication; and long disquisitions of what they know already will not be endured.

Napoleon, in an address of seven minutes, thrilled his army and thrilled Europe. Christ's sermon on the Mount, the model sermon, was less than eighteen minutes long at ordinary rate of delivery. It is not electricity scattered over the sky that strikes but electricity gathered into a thunderbolt and hurled; and it is not religious truth scattered over, spread out over a vast reach of time, but religious truth projected in compact form that flashes light upon the soul and drives its indifference. When the coming sermon arrives in this land and in the Christian Church, the sermon which is to arouse the world and startle the nations and usher in the kingdom, it will be a brief sermon.

The coming sermon will be a popular sermon. There are those who in these times speak of a popular sermon as though there must be something wrong about it. As these critics are dull themselves, the world gets the impression that a sermon is good in proportion as it is stupid. Christ was the most popular preacher the world ever saw; and, considering the small number of the world's population, had the largest audiences ever gathered. He never preached anywhere without making a sensation.

People rushed out in the wilderness to hear him, reckless of their physical necessities. So great their anxiety to hear Christ that, taking no food with them, they would have fainted and starved had not Christ performed a miracle and fed them. Why did so many people take the truth at Christ's hands? Because they understood it. He illustrated his subjects by a hen and her chickens, by a bushel measure, by a handful of salt, by a bird's flight and by a lily's aroma. All the people knew what he meant and flocked to hear him. And when the coming sermon of the Christian Church appears it will not be Princetonian, nor Rochesterian, nor Andoverian, but Olivetic—plain, practical, unique, earnest, comprehensive of all the woes, wants, sins, sorrows, and necessities of an auditory.

When the coming sermon arrives all the churches of Christ in our great cities will be thronged. The world wants spiritual help. All who have buried their dead want comfort. All know themselves to be mortal, and to be immortal, and they want to hear about the great future. We hear a great deal of discussion now all over the land about why people do not go to church. The reason is because the sermons are not practical and sympathetic and helpful.

The sermon of the future will be an awakening sermon. From altar-rail to the front doorstep, under that sermon an audience will get up and start for heaven. There will be in it a staccato passage. It will not be a lullaby; it will be a battle charge. Men will drop their sins, for they will feel the hot breath of pursuing retribution on the back of their necks. It will be a sermon sympathetic with all the physical distresses as well as the spiritual distresses of the world. It will be an every-day sermon going right down into every man's life, and it will teach him how to vote, how to bargain, how to do any

work he is called to; how to wield trowel and pen and pencil and yardstick and plane. And it will teach women how to preside over their households and how to educate their children and how to imitate Miriam and Esther and Vashti and Eunice and Mary, the mother of Christ; and those women who on Northern and Southern battlefields were mistaken by the wounded for angels of mercy fresh from the throne of God.

The coming sermon will be delivered in the fresh and spirited language then in use. Why should we put our thoughts for pulpit address in modes of expression belonging to other times? As well adopt for our day the cocked hat and the knee breeches and hair queue, common in 1776. Clergymen animated and interesting on platform and at literary banquets and in social circles are often dull in the pulpit.

Some of our greatest efforts of all our lives have been the efforts to keep attentive while seated under some able and learned sermon on "Foreordination" and "The Eternal Generation of the Son." The themes of the Gospel which are the sublimest and most stirring themes in the universe, when put into phraseology which we have heard all our lives, act as a lullaby, a religious narcotic, a holy anodyne, a pious opiate. What right have we to shut up ourselves to a few hundred words of utterance, when out of the more than one hundred and fourteen thousand words of our language we might make an entertaining and arousing selection.

What we, the preachers of the Gospel, most need to-day is first more Holy Ghost power, and next an enlarged and enriched and regenerated vocabulary. But there will be no lack in the coming sermon of which I speak. It will not be the vocabulary of the seventeenth or eighteenth or nineteenth century, but of the time in which it will be delivered.

V

Cloaks for Sin

Sin is always disguised. Decked and glossed and perfumed and masked, it gains admittance into places from which it would otherwise be repelled. As silently as when it glided into Eden and as plausibly as when it talked to Christ at the top of the temple, it now addresses man. Could people look upon sin as it always is—an exhalation from the pit, the putrefaction of infinite capacities, the ghastly, loathsome, God-smitten monster that uprooted Eden and killed Christ, and would push the entire race into darkness and pain—the infernal charm would be broken. To men now, sin is laughter and introduction to luxurious gratification. Jesus Christ suggests a fact which everybody ought to know, and that is, that sin, to hide its deformity and shame, is accustomed to wearing a cloak, and the Savior also sets forth the truth that God can see straight through all such wrappings and thicknesses. I want now to speak of several kinds of cloaks with which men expect to cover up their iniquities, for the fashion in regard to these garments is constantly changing, and every day beholds some new style of wearing them; and if you will tarry a while I will show you five or six patterns of cloaks.

First are those who being honored with official power expect to make that a successful cloak for their sin. There is a sacredness in office. God himself is king and all who hold authority in the world serve under him. That community has committed a monstrous wrong which

has elevated to this dignity persons disqualified either by their ignorance or their immorality. Nations which elevate to posts of authority those not qualified to fill it will feel the deterioration. Solomon expresses this thought when he said: "Woe unto thee, O land, when thy king is a child and thy princes drink in the morning." While positions of trust may be disgraced by the character of those who fill them, I believe God would have us respectful to the offices, though we may have no admiration for their occupants. Yet this dignity which office confers can be no apology for transgression. Nebuchadnezzar and Ahab and Herod, in the Day of Judgment, must stand on the level with the herdsman that kept their flocks and the fishermen of Galilee; and king and president and governor must give an account of God and be judged by the same law as that which judges the beggar and the slave. Sin is all the more obnoxious when it is imperial and lordly. You cannot make pride or injustice or cruelty sacred by giving it a throne. Belshazzar's decanters could not keep the mysterious finger from writing on the wall. Ahab's sin literally hurled him from the throne to the dogs. The imperial vestments of wicked Jehoram could not keep Jehu's arrow from striking through his heart. Jezebel's queenly pretension could not save her from being thrown over the wall. No barricade of thrones can arrest God's justice in its unerring march. No splendor or thickness of official robes can be a sufficient cloak of sin. Henry the Eighth, Louis the Fifteenth, Catherine of Russia, Mary of England—did their crowns save them? No ruler ever sat so high that the King of kings was not above him.

Again, elegance of manners cannot successfully hide iniquity from the eye of God. That model, gentlemanly apostle, Paul, writes to us: "Be courteous." That man can neither be a respectable worldling nor a consistent

Christian who lacks good manners. One of the first effects of the grace of God upon an individual is to make him a gentleman. But while these excellencies of manner are so important they cannot hide any deformity of moral character. How often it is we find attractiveness of person, suavity of manners, gracefulness of conversation, gallantry of behavior thrown like wreaths upon moral death. The flowers that grow upon the scorixæ of Vesuvius do not make it any less of a volcano. The sepulchers in Christ's time did not exhaust all the whitewash. Some of the biggest scoundrels have been the most fascinating. But the divine justice cannot be satisfied with smiles and elegant gesticulation. Christ looks deeper than the skin, and such a ragged cloak as the one in which you are trying to cover yourself will be no hiding in the day of his power. The deeds done in the body will be the test, and not the rules of Lord Chesterfield.

Again, let me say that the mere profession of religion is but a poor wrapping to protect a naked soul. The importance of making a public profession of religion, if the heart be renewed, cannot be exaggerated. Christ positively, and with the earnestness of the night before his crucifixion, commanded it. But it is the result of Christian character not the cause of it. Our church certificate is a poor title to heaven. We may have the name and not the reality. There are those who throw themselves back with complacency upon their public confession of Christ, although they give no signs of renewal of heart and life. If Satan can induce a man to build on such a foundation as that he has accomplished his object. We cannot imagine the abhorrence with which God looks upon such a procedure. What would be the feelings of a shepherd if he saw a wolf in the same fold with his flocks, however quiet he might seem to lie, or a general if among his troops he saw one wearing the appointed uniform who

nevertheless really belonged to the opposing host. Thus must the Heavenly Shepherd look upon those who though they are not his sheep have climbed up some other way, and thus must the Lord of hosts look upon those who pretend to be soldiers of the Cross while they are his armed enemies. The world may not be able to see through it, but in the day of reckoning it will be found that you have no cloak for your sin.

Furthermore, outward morality will be no covering for the hidden iniquity of the spirit. The Gospel of Christ makes no assault upon good works. They are as beautiful in God's eye as in ours, but good works cannot be the ground of our salvation. What we do right cannot pay for what we do wrong. Admit that you have all those traits of character which give merely worldly respectability and influence, you must acknowledge that during the course of your life you have done many things you ought not to have done. How are those difficult matters to be settled? Ah, my friends, we must have atonement. No Christ, no salvation. The great Redeemer comes in and says, "I will pay your indebtedness." So that which was dark enough before is bright enough now. The stripes that we deserve have fallen on Christ. On his scourged and bleeding shoulders he carries us up over the mountain of our sins and the hills of our iniquities. Traits of character that may make us influential on earth will not necessarily open to us the gate of heaven. The plank that will be strong enough for a house floor would not do for a ship's hulk. Mere morality might be enough here but cannot take you through sea storm into heaven's harbor. Christ has announced to all ages, "I am the way, the truth, the life; him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." But pitiable in the day of accounts will be the condition of that man, though he may have given all his estate to benevolent purposes, and passed his life

in the visiting of the distressed, and done much to excite the admiration of the good and the great, if he have no intimate relation to Jesus Christ. There is a pride and a depravity in his soul that he has never discovered. A brilliant outside will be no apology for a depraved inside. It is no theory of mine but a declaration of God, who cannot lie, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified."

Again, exalted social position will be no cloak for sin. Men look through the wicket door of prisons and, seeing the incarcerated wretches, exclaim: "Oh, how much vice there is in the world!" And they pass through the degraded streets of a city and, looking into the doors of hovels and the dens of corruption they call them God-forsaken abodes. But you might walk along the avenues through which the opulent roll in their pomp and into mansions elegantly adorned and find that even in the admired walks of life Satan works mischief and death. The first temptation Satan wrought in a garden, and he understands yet most thoroughly how to insinuate himself into any door of ease and splendor. Men infrequently judge of sin by the places in which it is committed, but iniquity in satin is to God as loathsome as iniquity in rags, and in the Day of Judgment the sinners of the avenues and the slums will all be driven in one herd. Men cannot escape at last on the plea of being respectably sinful. You know Dives was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day, but his fine clothes and good dinners did not save him. He might on earth have drunk something as rich as champagne and cognac, but at last he asked for one drop of water. You cannot trade off your attractive abodes here for a house of many mansions on high, and your shade groves here will not warrant you a seat under the tree of life. When God drove Adam and Eve out of Eden he showed that

merely living in a garden of delights and comforts will never save a man or a woman. By giving you so much earthly luxury and refinement he intimated that he would have you enjoy yourselves, but he would not have you wrap yourself up in them as a cloak to hide your sins. God now walks in your garden as he did in Eden even in the cool of the day, and he stands by your well as he did by a well in Samaria, and he would make your comfort on earth a type of your rapture in heaven.

Furthermore, mere soundness of religious belief will not hide our iniquities. There are men whose heads are as sound as great learning can make them, whose hearts are as rotten as Tom Paine's or Charles Guiteau's. It is important that we be theoretical Christians. It is utter folly in this day for a man to have no preference for any one form of faith of the different sects. There are those who never become Christians because their obstinacy prevents them from ever taking a fair view of what religion is. They are like a brute beast in the fact that their greatest strength lies in their horns. They are combatant, and all they are ever willing to do for their souls is to enter an ecclesiastical fight. I have met men who would talk all day upon the ninth chapter of Romans, who were thoroughly helpless before the fourteenth chapter of John. But there are those who, having escaped from this condition, are now depending entirely upon their soundness of religious theory. The doctrines of man's depravity and Christ's atonement and God's sovereignty are theoretically received by them. But, alas! there they stop. It is only the shell of Christianity containing no evangelical life. They stand looking over into heaven and admire its beauty and its song and are so pleased with the looks from the outside that they cannot be induced to enter. They could make a better argument for the truth than ten thousand Christians who have in their

hearts received it. If syllogisms and dilemmas and sound propositions and logical deductions could save their souls they would be among the best of Christians. They could correctly define repentance and faith and the atonement, while they have never felt one sorrow for sin nor exercised a moment's confidence in the great Sacrifice. They are almost immovable in their position. We cannot present anything about the religion of Christ that they do not know. The Savior described the fate of such a one in his parable: "And that servant which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." Theories in religion have a beauty of their own, but if they result in no warmth of Christian life it is the beauty of hornblende and feldspar. Do not call such coldness and hardness religion. The River of Life never freezes over. Icicles never hang on the eaves of heaven. Soundness of intellectual belief is a beautiful cloak, well woven and well cut, but in the hour when God shall demand our souls it will not of itself avail to hide our iniquities. "But now they have no cloak for their sin."

My friends, can it be that I have been unkind, and torn from you some hope upon which you were resting for time and eternity? Verily, I would be unkind if, having taken away your cloak, I did not offer you something better. This is a cold world, and you want something to wrap around your spirit. Christ offers you a robe to-day. He wove it himself and will now with his own hand prepare it just to fit your soul. The righteousness he offers is like the coat he used to wear about Judea, without seam woven from top to bottom. There is a day of doom. Coward would I be if I did not dare tell you this. It shall be a day of unutterable disappointment to those who have trusted in their official dignity, in their outward morality, in their soundness of intellectual belief.

But I see a soul standing before God who once was thoroughly defiled. You look at him and you cannot find a single transgression anywhere about him. How is this? you ask. Was he not once a Sabbath breaker, a blasphemer, a robber, a perjurer, a thief, a murderer? Yes, but Christ hath cleansed him, Christ hath lifted him up. Christ hath clothed him in a spotless robe of righteousness. That is the reason why you cannot perceive his former degradation. This glorious hope in Christ's name is proffered to-day. Do you wonder at the earnestness of those who stand in pulpits beseeching men to be reconciled to God? In many of the palaces of Europe the walls are mosaic. Fragments of shells and glass are arranged by artists and aggregated into a pictorial splendor. What! made out of broken shells and broken glass! Oh, yes: God grant that by the transforming power of his Spirit we may all be made a part of the eternal palaces, our broken and fragmentary natures polished and shaped and lifted up to make a part of the everlasting splendors of the heavenly temple!

VI

The Echoes

At last I have found it. The Bible has in it a recognition of all phases of the natural world from the aurora of the midnight heavens to the phosphorescence of the tumbled sea. But the well-known sound that we call the echo I found not until a few days ago: "The sounding again of the mountains." That is the echo. Ezekiel had heard it again and again. Born among the mountains and in his journey to distant exile, having passed among mountains, it was natural that all through his writings there should loom up the mountains. Among them he had heard the sound of cataracts, and of tempests in wrestle with oak, and cedar, and the voices of the wild beasts, but a man of so poetic a nature as Ezekiel could not allow another sound, viz., the echo, to be disregarded, and so he gives us "the sounding again of the mountains."

Greek mythology represented the Echo as a nymph, the daughter of earth and air, following Narcissus through forests and into grottoes, and so strange and weird and startling is the echo I do not wonder that the superstitious have lifted it into the supernatural. You and I in boyhood or girlhood experimented with this responsiveness of sound. Standing half-way between the house and barn we shouted many a time to hear the reverberations, or out among the mountains back of our home, on some long tramp, we stopped and made exclamation with full lungs just to hear what Ezekiel calls "the sounding again of the mountains." The echo has

frightened many a child and many a man. It is no tranquillizing thing after you have spoken to hear the same words repeated by the invisible. All the silences filled with voices ready to answer. It would not be so startling if they said something else, but why do those lips of the air say just what you say? Do they mean to mock, or mean to please? Who are you and where are you, thou wondrous Echo? Sometimes its response is a reiteration. The shot of a gun, the clapping of the hands, the beating of a drum, the voice of a violin are sometimes repeated many times by the echo. Near Coblenz that which is spoken has seventeen echoes. In 1766 a writer says that near Milan, Italy, there were seventy such reflections of sound to one snap of a pistol. Play a bugle near the Lakes of Killarney and the tune is played back to you distinctly as when you played it. There is a well two hundred and ten feet deep at Carisbrooke Castle in the Isle of Wight. Drop a pebble into that well and the sound of its fall comes to the top of the well distinctly. A blast of an Alpine horn comes back from the rocks of Jungfrau in surge after surge of reflected sound until it seems as if every peak had lifted and blown an Alpine horn. But have you noticed—and this is the reason for the present discourse—that this echo in the natural world has its analogy in the moral and religious world? Have you noticed the startling fact that what we say and do comes back in recoiled gladness or disaster?

First, parental teaching and example have their echo in the character of descendants. Exceptions? Oh, yes. So in the natural world there may be no echo, or distorted echo, by reason of peculiar proximities, but the general rule is that the character of the children is the echo of the character of parents. The general rule is that good parents have good children and bad parents bad children. The tendency is so mighty in that direction that it will get

worse and worse unless some hero or heroine in that line shall rise and say: "Here! By the help of God, I will stand this no longer. Against this hereditary tendency I protest." And he or she will set up an altar and a magnificent life that will reverse things and there will be no more cranks among that posterity. In another family father and mother are consecrated people. What they do is right; what they teach is right. The boys may for some time be wild, and daughters worldly, but watch! Years pass on, perhaps ten years, twenty years, and you go back to the church where the mother and father used to be consistent members. You have heard nothing about the family for twenty years, and you find the son and daughter that did not promise much at the start, now an echo, a glorious echo, a prolonged echo of parental teaching and example. The statuery of Thorwaldsen was sent from Italy to Germany and the straw in which the statues had been packed was thrown upon the ground. The next spring beautiful Italian flowers sprang up where this straw had been cast, for in it had been some of the seeds of Italian flowers; and whether conscious of it or not, we are all the time planting for ourselves and planting for others roses or thorns. You thought it only straw, yet among it were anemones.

But here is a slipshod home. The parents are a godless pair. They let their children do as they please. No example fit to follow. No examples of morality or religion. Sunday no better than any other day. The Bible no better than any other book. The house is a sort of inn where the older and younger people of the household stop for awhile. The theory acted on, though perhaps not acknowledged, is, "The children will have to do as I did, and take their chances. Life is a lottery, anyhow, and some draw prizes and some draw blanks, and we will trust to luck." Skip twenty years and come back to the

neighborhood where that family used to live. You find only the echo, the dismal echo, the awful echo, the dreadful echo of parental obliquity and unfaithfulness. The old folks heaped up a mountain of wrong influences, and this is only "the sounding of the mountains." Indeed our entire behavior in this world will have a resound. While opportunities fly in a straight line and just touch us once, and are gone never to return, the wrongs we practice upon others fly in a circle and they come back to the place from which they started. Doctor Guillotine thought it clever to introduce the instrument of death named after him; but did not like it so well when his own head was chopped off with the guillotine.

So, also, the Judgment Day will be an echo of all our other days. The universe needs such a day, for there are so many things in the world that need to be fixed up and explained. If God had not appointed such a day all the nations would cry out: "O God! give us a Judgment Day." But we are apt to think of it and speak about it as a day away off in the future, having no special connection with this day or any other day. The fact is that we are now making up its voices, its trumpets will only sound back again to us what we now say and do. That is the meaning of all that Scripture which says that Christ will on that day address the soul, saying: "I was naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and in prison and ye visited me." All the footsteps in that prison corridor as the Christian reformer walks to the wicket of the incarcerated, yes, all the whispers of condolence in the ear of that poor soul dying in a garret, yes, all the kindnesses are being caught up and rolled on until they dash against the Judgment Throne, and then they will be struck back into the ears of these sons and daughters of mercy. Louder than the crash of Mount Washington falling on its face in the world-wide catastrophe and the boiling

of the sea over the furnaces of universal conflagration will be the echo and reëcho of the good deeds done, and the sympathetic words uttered, and the mighty benefactions wrought. On that day all the charities, all the self-sacrifices, all the philanthropies, all the beneficent last wills and testaments, all the Christian work of all the ages will be piled up into mountains, and those who have served God and served the suffering human race will hear "the sounding of the mountains."

My subject advances to tell you that eternity itself is only an echo of time. Mind you the analogy warrants my saying this. The echo is not always exactly in kind like the sound originally projected. Lord Raleigh says that a woman's voice sounding from a grove was returned an octave higher. A scientist playing a flute in Fairfax County, Va., found that all the notes were returned, although some of them came in raised pitch. A trumpet sounded ten times near Glasgow, Scotland, and the ten notes were all repeated, but a third lower. And the spiritual law corresponds with the natural world. What we do of good or bad may not come back to us in just the proportion we expect it, but come back it will; it may be from a higher gladness than we thought or from a deeper woe, from a mightier conqueror or from a worse captive, from a higher throne or deeper dungeon. Our prayer or our blasphemy, our kindness or our cruelty, our faith or our unbelief, our holy life or our dissolute behavior will come back somehow. Suppose the boss of a factory or the head of a commercial firm some day comes out among his clerks or employees and putting his thumbs in the armholes of his vest says, with an air of swagger and jocosity: "Well, I don't believe in the Bible or the Church. The one is an impostor and the other is full of hypocrites. I declare I would not trust one of those very pious people farther than I could see him." That is all

he says, but he has said enough. The young men go back to their counters or their shuttles and say within themselves: "Well, he is a successful man and has probably studied up the whole subject and is probably right." That one lying utterance against Bibles and churches has put five young men on the wrong track, and though the influential man had spoken only in half jest, the echo shall come back to him in five ruined lifetimes and five destroyed eternities. You see the echoes are an octave lower than he anticipated. On the other hand, some rainy day when there are hardly any customers, the Christian merchant comes out from his counting room and stands among the young men who have nothing to do, and says: "Well, boys, there are a good many ups and downs in business, but there is an overruling Providence. Years ago I made up my mind to trust God and he has always seen me through." The clerks go to their places and they say within themselves: "Well, he is a successful merchant and I guess he knows what he is talking about, and the Christian religion must be a good thing. God knows I want some help in this battle with temptation and sin." The successful merchant who uttered the kind words did not know how much good he was doing, but the echo will come back in five lifetimes of virtue and usefulness, and five Christian death-beds, and five heavens. From all the mountains of rapture and all the mountains of glory and all the mountains of eternity he will catch what Ezekiel styles "the sounding again of the mountains."

Yes, I take a step further in this subject and say that our eternity will be a reverberation of our own earthly lifetime. What we are here we will be there, only on a larger scale. Time is only a bedwarfed eternity. Eternity is only an enlarged time. In this life our soul is in dry-dock. The moment we leave this life we are launched

for our great voyage and we sail on for centuries quintillion, but the ship does not change its fundamental structure after it gets out of the dry-dock, it does not pass from brig to schooner, or from schooner to man-of-war. What we are when launched from this world we will be in the world to come. O God! by thy converting and sanctifying spirit make us right here and now, that we may be right forever!

"Well," says some one, "this idea of moral, spiritual, and eternal echo is new to me. Is there not some way of stopping this echo?" My answer is: "God can and he only." If it is a cheerful echo, we do not want it stopped; if a baneful echo, we would like to have it stopped. The hardest thing in the world is to stop an echo. Many an oration has been spoiled and many an orator confounded by an echo. Costly churches, cathedrals, theaters, and music halls have been ruined by an echo. Architects have strung wires across auditoriums to arrest the echo. Oh, this mighty law of sound! oh, this subtle echo! There is only one being in the universe who thoroughly understands it: "The sounding again of the mountains."

If it is so hard to destroy a natural echo, how much harder to stop a spiritual echo, an immortal echo. You know that the echoes are affected by the surfaces and the shape of the rocks, and the depth of ravines, and the relative position of buildings. And once in heaven God will so arrange the relative position of mansions and temples and thrones that one of the everlasting charms of heaven will be the rolling, bursting, ascending, descending, chanting echoes. All the songs we ever sang devoutly, all the prayers we have ever uttered earnestly, all the Christian deeds we have ever done will be waiting to spring upon us in echo. In the future state, whether of rapture or ruin, we will listen for reverberations of earthly things and do-

ings. Voltaire standing amid the shadows will listen and from the millions whose godlessness and libertinism and debauchery were a consequence of his brilliant blasphemies will come back a weeping, wailing, despairing, agonizing million-voiced echo. Paul will, while standing in the light, listen, and from all the circles of the ransomed and from all the many mansions which he helped to people, and from all the thrones he helped to occupants, and from the gates he helped throng with arrivals, and from all the temples he helped fill with worshipers, there shall come back to him a glorious, ever-accumulating, transporting and triumphant echo. Oh, what will the tyrants and oppressors of the earth do with the echoes? Those who are responsible for the wars of the world will have come back to them all the groans, the shrieks, the cannonades, the bursting shells, the crackle of burning cities, and the crash of a nation's homes: Hohenlinden and Salamanca, Wagram and Sedan, Marathon and Thermopylæ, Bunker Hill and Lexington, South Mountain and Gettysburg. Sennacherib, listen! Semiramis, listen! Alexander and Napoleon, listen! But to the righteous will come back the blissful echoes. Composers of Gospel hymns and singers will listen for the return of Antioch and Brattle Street, Ariel and Dundee, Hartwell, Woodstock, Mount Pisgah and Coronation, Homeward Bound, and Shining Shore and all the melodies they ever started. Bishop Heber and Charles Wesley, and Isaac Watts and Thomas Hastings, and Horatius Bonar, and Frances Havegal, listen.

But you know as well as I do that there are some places where the reverberations seem to meet and standing there they rush upon you, they capture your ear. And at the point where all heavenly reverberations meet, Christ will stand and listen for the resound of all his sighs and groans and sacrifices, and they shall come back

in an echo in which shall mingle the acclaim of a redeemed world, and the "Jubilate Deo" of a full heaven. Echo saintly, cherubic, archangelic! Echo of thrones! Echo of temples! Omnipotent Echo! Everlasting Echo!

VII

A Dart Through the Liver

There is a fashion in sermonics. A comparatively small part of the Bible is called on for texts. Most of the passages of Scripture, when announced at the opening of sermons, immediately divide themselves into old discussions that we have heard from boyhood, and the effect is soporific. The auditor guesses at the start just what the preacher will say. There are very important chapters and verses that have never been preached from. Much of my lifetime I am devoting to unlocking these golden chests and blasting open these quarries. We talk about the heart, and sing about the heart; but if we refer to the physical organ we call the heart, it has not half so much to do with spiritual health or disease, moral exaltation, or spiritual depression, as the organ to which Solomon calls us when he describes sin progressing "till a dart strike through his liver." The gospel of Health is a theme we all need more to study and practice.

Solomon's anatomical and physiological discoveries were so very great that he was nearly three thousand years ahead of the scientists of his day. He reveals the fact that he had studied that largest gland of the human system, the liver, not by the electric light of the modern dissecting room, but by the dim light of a comparatively dark age, and yet had seen its important function in the God-built castle of the human body. Oh, this vital organ is like the eye of God in that it never sleeps. Solomon knew of it, and had noticed either in vivisection or *post-*

mortem what awful attacks sin and dissipation make upon it. Like a javelin of retribution not glancing off or making a slight wound but piercing it from side to side "till the dart strike through the liver."

There is a gospel of Health. In taking diagnosis of the diseases of the soul you must also take the diagnosis of the diseases of the body. As if to recognize this, one whole book of the New Testament was written by a physician. Luke was a doctor, and he discourses much of physical conditions, and he tells of the good Samaritan's medication of the wounds by pouring in oil and wine, and recognizes hunger as a hindrance to hearing the Gospel, so that the five thousand were fed; and records the sparse diet of the prodigal away from home, and the extinguished eyesight of the beggar by the wayside, and lets us know of the hemorrhage of the wounds of the dying Christ, and the miraculous *post-mortem* resuscitation. Any estimate of the spiritual condition that does not include also the physical condition is incomplete.

"But," says some Christian man, "no one ought to allow physical disorder to depress his soul. He ought to live so near to God as to be always in the sunshine." I warrant that the man who gives that advice has a sound liver. Thank God for healthy hepatic condition, for just as certainly as you lose it, you will some time, like David, and Jeremiah, and like Cowper, and like ten thousand other invalids, be playing a dead march on the same organ with which now you play a toccata.

The theory is abroad that we must first sow our wild oats and afterwards Michigan wheat. Let me break that delusion. Wild oats are generally sown in the liver, and they can never be pulled up. They so preoccupy that organ that there is no room for the implantation of a righteous crop. You see aged men about us at eighty, erect, agile, splendid, grand old men. How much wild

oats did they sow between eighteen and thirty? None, absolutely none. Remember that while in after life, and after years of dissipation you may perhaps have your heart changed, religion does not change the liver. God forgives, but outraged physical law never! Solomon knew what he was talking about. He had in early life been a profligate, and he rises up on his throne of worldly splendor to shriek out a warning to all centuries.

That young man smoking too many cigarettes and cigars has no idea that he is getting for himself smoker's liver; that young man has no idea that he has by early dissipation so depleted his energies that he will go into battle only half armed. Oh, my young brother, do not make the mistake that thousands are making, in opening the battle against sin too late; for this world too late, and for the world to come too late. What brings that express train from St. Louis into Jersey City three hours late? They lost fifteen minutes early on the route, and that affected them all the way; and they had to be switched off there and detained here, and detained there; and the man who loses time and strength in the earlier part of the journey of life will lose it all the way through—the first twenty years of life damaging the following fifty years.

I charge you in the name of God to take better care of your health. When some of you die, if your friends put on your tombstone a truthful epitaph, it will read: "Here lies a victim of late suppers." Or it will be: "Ten cigars a day closed my earthly existence"; or it will be: "Thought I could do at seventy what I did at twenty, and I am here"; or, "This is where I have stacked my harvest of wild oats"; or instead of words the stone cutter will chisel for an epitaph on the tombstone, two figures, namely, a dart and a liver.

There is a kind of sickness that is beautiful when it comes from overwork for God, or one's country, or one's

own family. I have seen wounds that were glorious. I have seen an empty sleeve that was more beautiful than the most muscular forearm; I have seen a green shade over the eye that was shot out in battle that was more beautiful than any two eyes that had passed without injury. I have seen an old missionary worn out with the malaria of African jungles, who looked to me more radiant than a gymnast; I have seen a mother after six weeks watching over a family of children down with scarlet fever, with a glory around her pale and worn face that surpassed the angelic. It all depends on how you got your sickness and in what battle your wounds. If you must get sick and worn out, let it be in God's service and in the effort to make the world better, not in the service of sin. One of the most pathetic scenes I ever witness, and often see, is men and women converted in the fifties and sixties, wanting to be useful, but they have so served the world and Satan in the earlier parts of their life that they have no physical energy left for the service of God. They sacrificed nerves, muscles, lungs, heart and liver on the wrong altar; they fought on the wrong side; and now when their sword is all hacked up they enlist for Emmanuel. When the high-mettled cavalry horse, which that man spurred into many a cavalry charge with a champing bit and flaming eye and neck clothed with thunder, is worn out and spavined and ring-boned and springhalted, he rides up to the great Captain of our Salvation and offers his services. When such persons might have been, through the good habits of a lifetime, crashing the battle-ax through helmeted iniquities, they are spending their days and nights in trying to extract the dart from their outraged liver.

VIII

The Monarch of Books

Old books go out of date. When they were written they discussed questions which were being discussed; they struck at wrongs which have long ago ceased, or advocated institutions which excite not our interest. Were they books of history these facts have been gathered from the imperfect mass, better classified and more lucidly presented. Were they books of poetry, they were interlocked with wild mythologies which have gone up from the face of the earth like the mists at sunrise. Were they books of morals, civilization will not sit at the feet of barbarism; neither do we want Sappho, Pythagoras and Tully to teach us morals. Even the old books we have left, with exceptions, have but very little effect upon our times. Books are human; they have a time to be born, they are fondled, they grow in strength, they have a middle life of usefulness; then comes old age—they totter and they die.

Many of the national libraries are merely the cemeteries of dead books. Some of them lived flagitious lives and died deaths of ignominy. Some were virtuous and accomplished a glorious mission. Some went into the ashes through inquisitorial fires. Some found their funeral pile in sacked and plundered cities. Some were neglected and died as foundlings at the door of science. Some expired in the author's study, others in the publisher's hands. Ever and anon there comes into your possession an old book, its author forgotten and its usefulness done, and with leathern lips it seems to say, "I wish I were dead." Monuments have been raised over

poets and philanthropists. Would that some tall shaft might be erected in honor of the world's buried books! The world's authors would make pilgrimage thereto, and poetry, and literature, and science, and religion would consecrate it with their tears.

Not so with one old Book. It started in the world's infancy. It grew under prophet's mantle and under the fisherman's coat of the apostles; in Rome, in Ephesus and Jerusalem and Patmos. Tyranny issued edicts against it, and infidelity put out the tongue, and Mohammedanism from its mosques hurled its anathemas, but the old Bible still lived. It crossed the English Channel and was greeted by Wickliffe and James I. It crossed the Atlantic and struck Plymouth Rock, until like that of Horeb it gushed with blessedness. Churches and asylums have gathered all along its way, ringing their bells and stretching out their hands of blessing; and every Sabbath there are innumerable heralds of the cross with their hands on this open, grand, free, old English Bible.

It will not accomplish its mission until it has climbed the icy mountains of Greenland; until it has gone over the granite cliffs of China; until it has thrown its glow amid the Austrian mines; until it has scattered its gems among the diamond districts of Brazil; and all crowns by the fires of revolution shall be melted into one crown, and this Book shall, at the very gate of heaven, have waved in the ransomed empires. Not until then will this glorious Bible have accomplished its mission.

Suppose a book now to be written came in conflict with a great many things, and was written by bad men or impostors. How long would such a book stand? It would be scouted by everybody. And I say if that Bible had been an impostor; or if it had not been written by the men who said they wrote it, if it had been a mere collection of falsehoods, do you not suppose that it would

have been immediately rejected by the people? If Job and Isaiah and Jeremiah and Paul and Peter and John were impostors, they would have been scouted by nations and generations. If that Book has come down through fires of centuries without a scar, it is because there is nothing in it destructible.

While God wrote the Bible, at the same time he wrote this commentary, that "the statutes of the Lord are right" on leaves of rock and shell, bound in clasps of metal. In authenticity and in genuineness the statutes of the Lord are right.

I know there are a great many people who think it is merely a collection of genealogical tables and dry facts. That is because they do not know how to read the Book. If you take up the most interesting novel that was ever written, and if you commence at the four hundredth page to-day, and to-morrow at the three hundredth, and the next day at the first page, how much sense or interest would you get out of it? Yet that is the very process to which the Bible is subjected every day. An angel from heaven reading the Bible in that way could not understand it. The Bible, like all other palaces, has a door by which to enter and a door by which to go out. Genesis is the door to go in and Revelation the door to go out.

These epistles of Paul the Apostle are merely letters written, folded up and sent by couriers to the different churches. Do you read other letters the way you read Paul's letters? Suppose you get a business letter and you know that in it there are important financial propositions, do you read the last page first, and then one line of the third page, and another of the second and another of the first? No, you begin with "Dear Sir" and end with "Yours truly." Now here is a letter from the throne of God written to our lost world; it is full of magnificent hopes and propositions and we read to-day a few

verses in Revelation and to-morrow a passage in Genesis and the next a verse in the Psalms, and of course we do not understand. Beside that, people read the Bible when they cannot read anything else. It is a dark day, and they do not feel well and they do not go to business, and after lounging about for a while they pick up the Bible, and their mind refuses to enjoy the truth. While the Bible is to be read on stormy days and while your head aches, it is also to be read in the sunshine and when your nerves, like harp-strings, thrum the song of health. While your vision is clear, walk in this paradise of truth, and while your mental appetite is good, pluck these clusters of grace.

I am fascinated with the conciseness of this Book. Every word is packed full of truth. Every sentence is double-barreled. Every paragraph is like an old banyan tree with a hundred roots and a hundred branches.

Where is there in the world of poetic description anything like Job's champing, neighing, pawing, lightning-footed, thunder-necked war horse? Dryden's, Milton's, Cowper's tempests are very tame compared with David's storm that wrecks the mountains of Lebanon and shivers the wilderness of Kadesh. Why, it seems as if to the feet of these Bible writers the mountains brought all their gems, and the seas all their pearls, and the gardens all their frankincense, and the spring all its blossoms and the harvests all their wealth and heaven all its grandeur, and eternity all its stupendous realities; and that since then poets, and orators and rhetoricians have been drinking from exhausted fountains, and searching for diamonds in a realm utterly rifled and ransacked.

This book is the hive of all sweetness. It is the armory of all well-tempered weapons. It is the tower containing the crown jewels of the universe. It is the Lamp that kindles all other lights. It is the home of all

majesties and splendors. It is the marriage ring that unites the celestial and the terrestrial, while all the clustering, white-robed denizens of the sky stand around rejoicing at the nuptials. This Book is the wreath into which are twisted all garlands; it is the song into which are struck all harmonies; it is the river into which are poured all the great tides of Hallelujah; it is the firmament in which suns and moons and stars and constellations and universes and eternities wheel and blaze and triumph. Where is the young man's soul with any music in it that is not stirred with Jacob's lament, or Nahum's dirge, or Habakkuk's dithyrambic, or Paul's march of the resurrection?

I am also amazed at the variety of this Book. Mind you, not contradiction or collision, but variety. Just as in the song you have the basso and alto and soprano and tenor—they are not in collision with each other, but come in to make up the harmony—so it is in this Book; there are different parts of this great song of redemption. The prophet comes and takes one part, and the patriarch another part, and the evangelist another part, and apostles another part, four parts, and yet they all come into the grand harmony—"the song of Moses and the Lamb." God prepared the Book for all classes of people. For instance, little children would read the Bible, and God knew it; so he allows Matthew and Luke to write sweet stories about Christ with the doctors of the law, and Christ at the well, and Christ at the cross so that any little child can understand them. Then he knew that the aged people would want to read the Book, so he allows Solomon to compact a world of wisdom in that Book of Proverbs. God knew that the historians would want to read it and so he allows Moses to give the plain statement of the Pentateuch. God knew that the poet would want to read it, and so he allows Job to picture the

heavens as a curtain, and Isaiah the mountains as weighed in a balance, and the waters as held in the hollow of the Omnipotent hand; and God touched David until in the latter part of the Psalms, he gathers a great choir standing in galleries above each other—beasts and men in the first gallery; above them hills and mountains; above them fire and hail and tempest; above them sun and moon and stars of light; and on the highest gallery arrays the hosts of angels; and standing before this great choir, reaching from the depths of earth to the heights of heaven, like the leader of a great orchestra, he lifts his hands, crying: "Praise ye the Lord. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord," and all earthly creatures in their song, and mountains with their waving cedars, and tempests in their thunder, and rattling hail, and stars on all their trembling harps of light, and angels on their thrones, respond in magnificent acclaim: "Praise ye the Lord. Let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord."

The Bible is right in its effects. I do not care where you put the Bible, it just suits the place. You put it in the hand of a man seriously concerned about his soul. I see people often giving to the serious soul this and that book. It may be very well, but there is no book like the Bible. He reads the commandments, and pleads to the indictment, "Guilty." He takes up the Psalms of David and says: "They just describe my feelings." He flies to good works; Paul starts him out of that by the announcement: "A man is not justified by works." He falls back in his discouragement; the Bible starts him up with the sentences: "Remember Lot's wife," "Grieve not the Spirit." Then the man in despair begins to cry out: "What shall I do?" and a voice reaches him, saying: "Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Take this Bible and place it in the hands of men in

trouble. Is there anybody among you in trouble? I might better ask, are there any who have never been in trouble? Put this Bible in the hands of the troubled. You find that as some of the best berries grow on the sharpest thorns, so some of the sweetest consolations of the Gospel grow on the most stinging affliction. You thought that Death had grasped your child. Oh, no! it was only the Heavenly Shepherd taking a lamb out of the cold. Christ bent over you as you held the child in your lap, and putting His arms gently around the little one, said: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Put the Bible in the family. There it lies on the table, an unlimited power. Polygamy and unscriptural divorce are prohibited. Parents are kind and faithful, children polite and obedient. Domestic sorrows lessened by being divided, joy increased by being multiplied. Oh, father, mother, take down that long-neglected Bible and read it yourselves and let your children read it.

There are so many who would have you believe that the Bible is an outlandish book, and obsolete. It is fresher and more intense than any book that yesterday came out of the great publishing houses. Make it your guide in life and your pillow in death.

After the battle of Richmond a dead soldier was found with his hand lying on the open Bible. The summer insects had eaten the flesh from the hand but the finger lay on these words: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Yes, this Book will become in your last days, when you turn away from all other books, a solace for your soul. Perhaps it was your mother's Bible; perhaps the one given you on your wedding day; its cover now worn out and its leaf faded with age; but its bright promises will flash upon the opening gates of heaven.

IX

The World Versus the Soul

I have to say that the world is a very grand property. Its flowers are God's thoughts in bloom. Its rocks are God's thoughts in stone. Its dewdrops are God's thoughts in pearl. This world is God's child—a wayward child, indeed; it has wandered off through the heavens. But nearly 2,000 years ago one Christmas night, God sent out a sister world to call that wanderer back and it hung over Bethlehem only long enough to get the promise of the wanderer's return; and now that lost world, with soft feet of light, comes treading back through the heavens. The hills, how beautiful they billow up, the edge of the wave white with the foam of crocuses! How beautiful the rainbow, the arched bridge on which heaven and earth come and talk to each other in tears after the storm is over! How nimble the feet of the lamp-lighters that in a few minutes set all the dome of the night ablaze with brackets of fire! How bright the car of the saffron cloud that rows across the sea of heaven! How beautiful the spring with bridal blossoms in her hair! I wonder who it is that beats time on a June morning for a bird orchestra. How gently the hair-bell tolls its fragrance on the air! There may be grander worlds, swarthier worlds, larger worlds than this: but I think that this is a most exquisite world—a mignonette on the bosom of immensity.

"Oh," you say, "take my soul! give me that world! I am willing to take it in exchange. I am ready now to bargain. It is so beautiful a world, so grand a world!"

You propose to exchange your soul for a world for which you have not title? Geologists tell us that it is already on fire, that the heart of the world is one great living coal; that it is just like a ship on fire at sea, the flames not bursting out because the hatches are down.

Astronomers have swept their telescopes through the sky, and have found out that there have been thirteen worlds, in the last two centuries, that have disappeared. At first they looked just like other worlds. Then they got deeply red—they were on fire. Then they got ashen, showing they were burned down. Then they disappeared, showing that even the ashes were scattered. And if the geologist be right in his prophecy, then our world is to go in the same way. And yet you want to exchange your soul for it. Ah, no; it is a world that is burning now.

I also add that this world is a property with which everybody who has taken it as a possession has had trouble. Napoleon had trouble with it. After conquering nations, by the force of his sword, he lies down to die, his entire possession the military boots that he insisted on having upon his feet when he was dying. He had even greater sorrow perhaps in having to retreat from Moscow, his army defeated, his hopes shattered, and his pride of achievement humbled. So it has been with men who had better ambition. Thackeray, one of the most genial and lovable souls, after having won the applause of all intelligent lands through his wonderful genius, sits down in a restaurant in Paris, looks to the other end of the room and wonders whose that forlorn and wretched face is; rising up after a while, he finds that it is Thackeray in the mirror. Talking about a man gaining this world! No man ever gained it or a thousandth part of it. You are demanding that you sell your soul, not for this world, but for a fragment of it. Here is a man who has had a large estate for forty or fifty

years. He lies down to die. You say, "That man is worth millions and millions of dollars!" Is he? You call up a surveyor with his compass and chains, and you say, "There is property extending three miles in one direction and three miles in another."

Is that the way to measure that man's property? No! You do not want a surveyor, with his compass and chains. That is not the way you want to measure that man's property now. It is an undertaker that you need, who will come and put his finger in his vest pocket, and take out a tape line, and will measure five feet nine inches one way and two and a half feet the other way. That is a man's property. Oh, no; I forgot not so much as that, for he does not own even the place in which he lies in the cemetery. The deed to that belongs to the executors and the heirs. Oh, what a property you propose to exchange for your soul!

If you sell a bill of goods you go into the counting room and say to your partner: "Do you think that man is good for this bill? Can he give proper security? Will he meet the payment?" When you are offered this world as a possession I want you to test the matter, I do not want you to go into this bargain blindly. I want you to ask about the title—about the insurance—about whether you can keep it—about whether you can get all, or the ten-thousandth, or one hundred-thousandth part of it.

Now let us look at the other property—the soul. We cannot make a bargain without seeing the comparative value. The soul. How shall I estimate the value of it? Well, by its exquisite organization. It is the most wonderful piece of mechanism ever put together. Machinery is of value in proportion as it is mighty and silent at the same time. You look at the machinery and the engine in the Philadelphia Mint, and, as you see it performing its

wonderful work, you will be surprised to find how silently it goes. Machinery that roars and tears soon destroys itself; but silent machinery is often most effective. Now so it is with the soul of man, with its tremendous faculties—it moves in silence. Justice without any racket lifting its scales; memory, without any noise, bringing down its treasures; conscience taking its judgment-seat, without any excitement; the understanding and the will all doing their work. Velocity, majesty, might, but silence—silence. You listen at the door of your heart. You can hear no sound. The soul is all quiet. It is so delicate an instrument that no human hand can touch it. You break a bone, and with splinters and bandages the surgeon sets it; the eye becomes inflamed, the apothecary's wash cools it; but a soul off track, unbalanced, no human power can readjust. With one sweep of its wing it circles the universe, and overvaults the throne of God. Why, in the hour of death the soul is so mighty it throws aside the body as though it were a toy. It drives back medical skill as impotent. It breaks through the circle of loved ones who stand around the dying couch. With one leap it springs beyond star and moon and sun and chasms of immensity. Oh, it is a soul superior to all material things! No fires can consume it; no floods can drown it; no rocks can crush it; no walls can impede it; no time can exhaust it. It wants no bridge on which to cross a chasm. It wants no plummet with which to sound a depth. A soul so mighty, so swift, so silent, must it not be a priceless soul?

I calculate the value of a soul, also, by its capacity for happiness. How much joy can it get in this world out of friendships, out of books, out of clouds, out of the sea, out of flowers, out of ten thousand things; and yet all the joy it has here does not test its capacity. You are in

a concert before the curtain rises, and you hear the instruments preparing—the sharp snap of the broken string, the scrapings of the bow across the viol. “There is no music in that,” you say. It is only getting ready for the music. And all the enjoyment of the soul in this world, the enjoyment we think real enjoyment is only preparative. It is only the first stages of the thing, it is only the entrance, the beginning of that which shall be the orchestral harmonies and splendors of the redeemed.

You cannot test the full power of the soul for happiness in this world. How much power the soul has here to find enjoyment in friendship! but, oh, the grander friendships for the soul in the skies! How sweet the flowers here! but how much sweeter they will be there! I do not think that when flowers die on earth they die forever. I think that the fragrance of the flowers is the spirit being wafted away to glory.

I want to see what my soul is worth, and what your soul is worth, and what has been paid for it. For that immortal soul, the richest blood that was ever shed, the deepest groan that was ever uttered, all the griefs on earth compressed into one tear, all the sufferings of earth gathered into a rapier of pain, and struck through his holy heart. Does it not imply tremendous value?

I argue also the value of the soul from the home that has been fitted up for it in the future. One would think a street of adamant would have done. No; it is a street of gold. One would have thought that a wall of granite would have done. No; it is the flame of sardonyx mingling with the green of the emerald. One would have thought an occasional doxology would have done. No; it is a perpetual song. If the ages of heaven marched in a straight line, some day the last regiment perhaps might pass out of sight; but, no, the ages of heaven do not march

in a straight line, but in a circle around about the throne of God; forever, forever, tramp, tramp! A soul so bought, so equipped, so provided for, must be a priceless soul, a majestic soul, a tremendous soul. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

X

The Divine Surgeon

The world from the very beginning has been calling for surgeons, and their first skill is spoken of in Genesis, where they employed their art for the incisions of a sacred rite, God making surgery the predecessor of baptism.

The world has never seen but one surgeon who could straighten the crooked limb, cure the blind eye, or reconstruct the drum of a soundless ear, or reduce a dropsy without pain at the time or pain after, and that surgeon was Jesus Christ, the mightiest, grandest, gentlest, and most sympathetic surgeon the world has ever seen or ever will see; and he deserves the confidence and love and worship and hosannas of all the earth. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear." Was there ever such an oculist? That he was particularly sorry for the blind I take from the fact that the most of his works were with the diseased optic nerve. In the lands where this divine surgeon operated the cases of blindness were multiplied beyond everything else by the particles of sand floating in the air and the night dews falling on the eyelids of those sleeping on the top of their houses; and in some of these lands it is estimated that twenty out of a hundred people are totally blind. Amid all that crowd of visionless people what work for an oculist. He went up and down among those people who were slowly feeling their way by staff or led by the hand of man or dog and introducing them to the faces of their household, to the

sunrise and sunset and evening star. He ran his hand over the expressionless face and the shutters of both windows were swung wide open, and the restored one went home, crying, "I see! I see!" That is the oculist we all need. Till he touches our eyes we are blind. Yes, we are born blind. By nature we see things wrong if we see them at all. Our best eternal interests are put before us and we cannot see them. Or we have a defective vision which makes the things of this world larger than the things of the future, time bigger than eternity. Or we are color blind and cannot see the difference between darkness forever and the roseate morning of everlasting day. But Christ, the surgeon, comes in, and though we shrink back afraid to have him touch us, yet he puts his fingers on the closed eyelids of the soul and midnight becomes midday.

This surgeon is just as wonderful an aurist. A most wonderful instrument is the human ear. It is harp, drum and telegraph and telephone and whispering gallery all in one. We are told of only two cases he operated on as an ear surgeon. Why is it that while other surgeons used knives and forceps and probes and spectrosopes, this surgeon used only the ointment of his own lips? To show that all the curative power we ever feel comes straight from Christ. And if He touches us not we shall be deaf as a rock and dumb as a tomb. Oh, thou greatest of all aurists compel us to hear and help us to speak.

But what were the surgeon's fees for all these cures of eyes and ears and tongues and withered hands and crooked backs? The surgeon of whom I speak received not a shekel, not a penny, not a farthing. In his whole earthly life we know of his having had but sixty-two and a half cents. The greatest surgeon of all centuries gave all his services then, and offers all his services now free of all charge. "Without money and without price." You

may spiritually have your eyes opened, and your deaf ears unbarred, and your dumb tongues loosened, and your wounds healed, and your soul saved. If Christian people get hurt of body, mind and soul, let them remember that surgery is apt to hurt, but it cures and you can afford present pain for future glory. Beside that, there are powerful anesthetics in the divine promises that soothe and alleviate. No ether or chloroform or cocaine ever made one so superior to distress as a few drops of that magnificent anodyne: "All things work together for good to those who love God"; "Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning."

XI

Music in Worship

The best music has been rendered under trouble. The first duet that I know anything of was given by Paul and Silas when they sang praises to God and the prisoners heard them. The Scotch Covenanters, hounded by the dogs of persecution, sang the Psalms of David with more spirit than they have ever since been rendered. In this day of Gospel sunlight and free from all persecution there ought to be a great multitude of men and women willing to sing the praises of God. All our churches need arousal on this subject. Those who can sing must throw their souls into the exercise, and those who cannot sing must learn how, and it shall be heart to heart, voice to voice, hymn to hymn, anthem to anthem, and the music shall swell jubilant with thanksgiving and tremulous with pardon.

Have you ever noticed the construction of the human throat as indicative of what God means us to do with it? In only an ordinary throat and lungs there are fourteen direct muscles and thirty indirect muscles that can produce a very great variety of sounds. What does that mean? It means that you should sing! Do you suppose that God who gives you such a musical instrument as that intends us to keep it shut? Suppose some great tyrant should get possession of the musical instruments of the world and should lock up the organ of Westminster Abbey and the organ of Lucerne and all the other great musical instruments of the world—you would call such a man

as that a monster; and yet you are more wicked if, with the human voice, a musical instrument of more wonderful adaptation than all the musical instruments that man ever created, you shut it against the praise of God.

Music seems to have been born in the soul of the natural world. The omnipotent voice with which God commanded the world into being seems to linger yet with its majesty and sweetness, and you hear it in the grain field, in the swoop of the wind amid the mountain fastnesses, in the canary's warble and the thunder shock, in the brook's tinkle and the ocean's pæan. There are soft cadences in nature and loud notes, some of which we cannot hear at all, and others that are so terrific that we cannot appreciate them. The animalculæ have their music, and the spicula of hay and globule of water are as certainly resonant with the voice of God as the highest heavens in which the armies of the redeemed celebrate their victories. When the breath of the flower strikes the air, and the wing of the firefly cleaves it, there is sound and there is melody; and as to those utterances of nature which seem harsh and overwhelming, it is as when you stand in the midst of a great orchestra, and the sound almost rends your ear because you are too near to catch the blending of the music. So, my friends, we stand too near the desolating storm and the frightful whirlwind to catch the blending of the music; but when that music rises to where God is, and the invisible beings who float above us, then I suppose the harmony is as sweet as it is tremendous. In the judgment day, that day of tumult and terror, there will be no dissonance to those who can appreciate the music. It will be as when sometimes a great organist, in executing some great piece, breaks down the instrument upon which he is playing the music. So, when the great march of the judgment day is played under the hand of earthquake and storm and conflagration, the

world itself will break down with the music that is played on it. The fact is, we are all deaf, or we should understand that the whole universe is but one harmony—the stars of the night only the ivory keys of a great instrument on which God's fingers play the music of the spheres.

Music seems dependent on the law of acoustics and mathematics, and yet where these laws are not understood at all the art is practiced. There are to-day five hundred musical journals in China. Two thousand years before Christ the Egyptians practiced this art. Pythagoras learned it. Lasus, of Hermione, wrote essays on it. Plato and Aristotle introduced it into their schools; but I have not much interest in that. My chief interest is in the music of the Bible. The Bible, like a great harp with innumerable strings, swept by the fingers of inspiration, trembles with it. As far back as the fourth chapter of Genesis you find the first organist and harper—Jubal. So far back as the thirty-first chapter of Genesis you find the first choir. All up and down the Bible you find sacred music—at weddings, at inaugurations, at the treading of the wine press. The Hebrews understood how to make musical signs above the musical text. When the Jews came from their distant homes to the great festivals at Jerusalem they brought harp and timbrel and trumpet and poured along the great Judæan highways a river of harmony, until in and around the temple the wealth of a nation's song and gladness had accumulated. In our day we have a division of labor in music, and we have one man to make the hymn, another to make the tune, another man to play it on the piano, and another man to sing it. Not so in Bible times. Miriam, the sister of Moses, after the passage of the Red Sea, composed a doxology, set it to music, clapped it on a cymbal, and at the same time sang it. David, the psalmist, was at the same time

poet, musical composer, harpist, and singer; and the majority of his rhythm goes vibrating through all the ages.

There were in Bible time stringed instruments—a harp of three strings played by fret and bow; a harp of ten strings, responding only to the fingers of the performer. Then there was the crooked trumpet, fashioned out of the horn of the ox or the ram. Then there were the sistrum and the cymbals, clapped in the dance or beaten in the march. There were four thousand Levites, the best men of the country, whose only business it was to look after the music of the temple. These four thousand Levites were divided into two classes, and officiated on different days. Can you imagine the harmony when these white-robed Levites, before the symbols of God's presence, and by the smoking altars and the candle-sticks that sprang upward and branched out like trees of gold and under the wings of the cherubim, chanted the one hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm of David? Do you know how it was done? One part of that great choir stood up and chanted: "Oh! give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good!" Then the other part of the choir, standing in some other part of the temple, would come in with the response: "For his mercy endureth forever." Then the first part would take up the song again, and say: "Unto him who only doeth great wonders." The other part of the choir would come in with overwhelming response: "For his mercy endureth forever," until in the latter part of the song, the music floating backward and forward, harmony grappling with harmony, every trumpet sounding, every bosom heaving, one part of this great white-robed choir would life the anthem: "Oh! give thanks unto the God of heaven," and the other part of the Levite choir would come in with the response: "For his mercy endureth forever."

But I am glad to know that all through the ages there has been great attention paid to sacred music. Am-

brosius, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Charlemagne, gave it their mighty influence, and in our day the best musical genius is throwing itself on the altars of God. Handel and Mozart and Bach and scores of other men and women have given the best part of their genius to church music. A truth in words is not half so mighty as a truth in song. Luther's sermons have been forgotten, but the "Judgment Hymn" he composed is resounding yet all through Christendom.

There is an everlasting distinction between music as an art and music as a help to devotion. Though a Schumann composed it, though a Mozart played it, though Sontag sang it, away with it if it does not make the heart better and honor Christ. Why should we rob the programs of worldly gayety when we have appropriate songs and tunes composed in our own day, as well as that magnificent inheritance of church psalmody which has come down fragrant with the devotions of other generations—tunes no more worn out than they were when our great-grandfathers climbed up on them from the church pew to glory? Dear old souls, how they used to sing! When they were cheerful, our grandfathers and grandmothers used to sing "Colchester." When they were very meditative, then the boarded meeting-house rang with "South Street" and "St. Edmond's." Were they struck through with tenderness they sang "Woodstock." Were they wrapped in visions of the glory of the Church they sang "Zion." Were they overborne with the love and glory of Christ they sang "Ariel." And in those days there were certain tunes married to certain hymns, and they have lived in peace a great while, these two old people, and we have no right to divorce them. "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

Born as we have been amid this great wealth of church music, augmented by the composition of artists in our

own day, we ought not to be tempted out of the sphere of Christian harmony and try to seek unconsecrated sounds. It is absurd for a millionaire to steal.

A characteristic of church music must be spirit and life. Music ought to rush from the audience like water from a rock—clear, bright, sparkling. If all the other part of the church service is dull, do not have the music dull. With so many thrilling things to sing about, away with all drawling and stupidity. There is nothing that makes me so nervous as to sit in a pulpit and look off on an audience with their eyes three-fourths closed and their lips almost shut, mumbling the praises of God. During one of my journeys I preached to an audience of two or three thousand people, and the music they made together did not equal one skylark! People do not sleep at a coronation; do not let us sleep when we come to a Savior's crowning.

I shall never forget hearing a Frenchman sing the "Marseillaise" on the Champs Elysées, Paris, just before the battle of Sedan in 1870. I never saw such enthusiasm before or since. As he sang that national air, oh! how the Frenchmen shouted! Have you ever in an English assemblage heard a band play "God Save the King"? If you have you know something about the enthusiasm of a national air. Now, I tell you that these songs we sing Sabbath by Sabbath are the national airs of the kingdom of heaven, and if you do not learn to sing them here, how do you ever expect to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb? I should not be surprised at all if some of the best anthems of heaven were made up of some of the best songs of earth. May God increase our reverence for Christian psalmody, and keep us from disgracing it by our indifference and frivolity.

When Cromwell's army went into battle, he stood at the head of it one day and gave out the long-meter doxol-

ogy to the tune of the "Old Hundred," and that great host, company by company, regiment by regiment, division by division, joined in the doxology: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

And while they sang they marched, and while they marched they fought, and while they fought they got the victory. O men and women of Jesus Christ, let us go into all our conflicts singing the praises of God, and then, instead of falling back, as we often do, from defeat to defeat, we will be marching on from victory to victory. "GLORY IN EXCELSIS" is written over many organs. Would that by our appreciation of the goodness of God and the mercy of Christ and the grandeur of heaven we could have "GLORIA IN EXCELSIS" written over all our souls. "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen!"

XII

A Tale Told, or, The Passing Years

The Israelites were forty years in the wilderness, and during thirty-eight of the forty nothing is recorded of them; and I suppose no other emigrants had a duller time or a more uninteresting time than they had. So they told stories—stories concerning themselves or concerning others; stories about the brick-kilns of Egypt, where they had toiled in slavery; stories about the Red Sea piled up into palisades at their crossing; stories of the lantern hung in the heavens to guide them by night; stories of ibises destroying the reptiles of the wilderness; stories of personal encounter. It must have been an awful thing to have had nothing to do for thirty-eight years, except to get lost every time they tried to escape from the wilderness. So they whiled away the time in story-telling. Indeed there were persons whose one business was to narrate stories, and they were paid by such trifles as they could pick up from the surrounding listeners. To such instances our text refers when it says: "We spend our years as a tale that is told."

It will do us all good to consider that our whole life is a story told—a good story or a bad story; a tragic story or a mirthful story; a wise story or a foolish story of success, or a story of failure; a clean story or a filthy story. "We spend our years as a tale that is told." Every person's life is a very interesting story. We have all of us been entertained by the story-teller when snowbound in the rail-train; or in the group on a winter's night in the farmhouse; or gathered around a blazing hearth with some

hunters in the mountain inn. Indeed it is a praiseworthy art to impersonate a good story well. If you doubt the practical and healthful and inspiring use of such a story take down from the library Washington Irving's *Tales of a Traveler*, or Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales*. But as interesting as any of these would be the story of many an obscure life, if the tale were as well told. Why do we all like biographies and autobiographies? Because they are stories of eminent human lives. But the story of the life of a backwoodsman, of a man who looks stupid, of one about whom you never heard a word, must be just as thrilling on a small scale as on a large scale is a life of a Cyrus or a Cæsar or a Pizarro, or a Mark Antony or a Charlemagne or the late General Gordon, who was upon a parapet leading his soldiers with nothing but a stick in his hand, and his troops cried: "Gordon, come down; you will be killed." But he did not come down, and one of the soldiers said: "It is all right. He don't mind being killed. He is one of those Christians." If you get the confidence of that very plain man just come out of the backwoods, and can induce him to give the stirring experiences of his life, he will tell you that which will make your blood curdle and your hair stand on end. That night when a panther disputed his way home. That landslide when the mountains seemed about to come down on his cabin. That accident to his household and no surgeon within fifteen miles. That long storm that shut them in, and the food exhausted. That contest at his doorway with bandits who thought there might be something worth taking. That death-bed with no one but himself to count the fluttering pulses.

In the humblest and most unpretending life there has been a commingling of gladness and gloom, of triumph and despair. Nothing that David Garrick ever enacted at Drury Lane Theater in the way of tragedy, or Charles

Matthews ever played in Covent Garden in the way of comedy, excelled things which on a small scale have been seen in the life of obscure men and women. Many a profound and learned sermon has put the audience to sleep, while some man whose phraseology could not be parsed, and whose attire was cut and fitted and made up by plainest housewife, has told the story of his life in a way that melted the prayer-circle into tears as easily as a warm April sun dissolves the snow of the previous night. Oh, yes, while "we spend our years as a tale that is told," it is an interesting story. It is the story of an immortal, and that makes it interesting. He is launched on an ocean of eternal years, in a voyage that will never terminate. He is striking the keynote of an anthem or a dirge that will never come to its last bar. That is what makes the devotional meetings of modern times so much more interesting than they used to be. They are filled not with discourses by laymen on the subject of justification and sanctification, which lay discourses administer more to the facetious than to the edifying, but with stories of what God has done for the soul; how everything suddenly changed; how the promises became balsamic in times of laceration; how he was personally helped out and helped up and helped on. Nothing can stand before such a story of personal rescue, personal transformation, personal illumination. The mightiest and most skillful argument against Christianity collapses under the ungrammatical but sincere statement. The atheistic professor of natural philosophy goes down under the story of that backwoodsman's conversion.

The New Testament suggests the power of the "tale that is told." Christ was the most effective story-teller of all the ages. The parables are only tales well told. Matchless stories: that of the traveler cut up by the thieves and the Samaritan paying his board bill at the

tavern; that of the big dinner, to which the invited guests sent in fictitious regrets; that of the shepherd answering the bleat of the lost sheep and all the rural neighbors that night helping him celebrate the fact that it was safe in the barnyard; that of the bad boy reduced to the swine's trough greeted home with such banqueting and jewelry that it stuffed the older son with jealousy and disgruntlement; that of the Pharisee full of braggadocio, and the publican smiting his breast with a stroke that brought down the heavens in commiseration; stories about leprosy, about paralysis, about catalepsy, about dropsy, about ophthalmia—stories that he so well told that they have rolled down to the present and will roll down through the entire future. The most of the Old Testament is made up of inspired anecdotes about Adam and Eve, about Jacob, about Esau, about Ahab and Jezebel, about Jonah, about Daniel, about Deborah, about Vashti—about men and women of whom the story gave an accurate photograph long before human photography was born. Let all Christian workers, Sunday-school teachers, and preachers know the power of the "tale that is told."

I heard Truman Osborn preach several sermons, but I remember nothing of what he said in public or private except a story that he told, and that was, among other things, the means of my salvation. If you have had experiences of pardon and comfort and disenthralment, tell of it. Tell it in the most pointed and dramatic way you can manage. Tell it soon or you may never tell it at all. Oh, the power of "the tale that is told." An hour's discourse about the fact that blasphemous behavior is sometimes punished in this world would not impress us as much as the simple story that in a town in New York State, at the close of the last century, thirty-six profane men formed themselves into a club, calling themselves

"Society of the Druids." They met regularly to deride and damage Christianity. One night in their awful meeting they burned a Bible and administered the sacrament to a dog. Two of them died that night. Within three days three were drowned. In five years all the thirty-six came to a bad end. Before a justice of peace it was sworn that two starved to death, seven were drowned, eight were shot, five committed suicide, seven died on the gallows, one was frozen to death and three died accidentally. Incidents like that sworn to would balk any proposed irreverent and blasphemous behavior.

In what way could the fact that infidelity will not help any one to die be so powerfully presented as by the incident concerning Voltaire, when a professional nurse was called in, and she asked: "Is the gentleman a Christian?" "Why do you ask that?" said the messenger. The nurse replied: "I am the nurse who attended Voltaire in his last illness, and for all the wealth of Europe I would never see another infidel die." What discourse in its moral and spiritual effect could equal a tale told like that?

Life is not only a story told but it is a brief story. A long narrative stretched out indefinitely loses its interest. It is generally the story that takes only a minute or half a minute to rehearse that arrests the attention. And that gives additional interest to the story of our life. It is a short story. Subtract from our life all the hours of necessary sleep, all the hours of incapacity through fatigue or illness, all the hours of childhood and youth before we get fairly started to work, and you have abbreviated the story of life so much that you can appreciate the Psalmist's remark when he says, "Thou hast made my days as a hand's breadth," and can appreciate the apostle James' expression when he compares life to "a vapor that appeareth for a little season and vanishes away."

It does not take long to tell all the vicissitudes of life—the gladness and the griefs, the arrivals and the departures, the successes and the failures, the victories and the defeats, the ups and the downs. The longer we live the shorter the years. We hardly get over the bewildering fatigue of selecting gifts for children and friends and see that the presents get off in time or arrive on the appropriate day than we see another advancing group of holidays. Autumnal fruit so sharply chases the summer harvest, and the snow of the white blossoms of spring-time come so soon after the snows of winter. It is a remark so often made that it fails to make any impression, a platitude that calls forth no reply: “How rapidly time goes.”

Every century is a big wheel of years which makes a hundred revolutions and breaks down. Every year a big wheel of months that makes twelve revolutions and then ceases. Geologists and theologians go into elaborations of guesses as to how long the world will probably last; how long before the volcanic forces will explode it or meteoric stroke demolish it or the cold of a long winter freeze out its population or the fires of a last conflagration burn it. That is all very well, but so far as the present population of the earth is concerned the world will last but a little longer. We begin life with a cry and end it with a groan, and the cry and groan are not far apart. Life, Job says, is like the flight of a weaver’s shuttle or, as David intimates, a story quickly told and laughed at and gone and displaced by another story, as a “tale that is told.”

As our life is short, not being punctual is one of the worst crimes. How many there are who know nothing of punctuality! They arrive at the depot five minutes after the train is gone. They get to the wharf in time to see that the steamer has swung five hundred yards from the

dock. They are late at church and annoy all who have promptly taken their places, the late comers not being as good as a Christian woman who when asked how she could always be so early at church, replied: "It is part of my religion not to disturb the religion of others." The tardy ones mentioned are apt to speak the word of counsel when it is too late! They are resolved to repent some time in the future, but when they come up "the door is shut." They resolve to save a soul when it is already ruined.

But short as time is, it is long enough if we rightly employ it. The trouble is we waste so much time we cannot catch up. Some of us have been chasing time we lost at twenty years of age, or thirty years of age, or forty years of age, and if we lived to be two hundred and fifty years of age we could never overtake it.

Life is not only a story told, but a story listened to. There is nothing more vexatious to any one than to tell a story when people are not attending. They may be whispering on some other subject, or they are preoccupied. One cannot tell a story effectually unless there are good listeners. Well, that which is called the "tale that is told" has plenty of listeners. There is no such thing as solitude, no such thing as being alone. God listens, and the air is full of spiritual intelligences all listening, and the world listens to the story of our life, some hoping it will be successful, others hoping it will be a failure.

We talk about public and private life, but there is no private life. The story of our life, however insignificant it may seem to be, will win the applause or hiss of a great multitude that no man can number. "As a tale that is told" among admirers or antagonists, celestials or pandemoniacs, the universe is full of listening ears as well as gleaming eyes. If we say or do the right thing, that is known. If we say or do the wrong thing, that is known.

I suppose the population of the intelligences in the air is more numerous than the population of the intelligences on earth. Oh, that the story of our life might be fit for such an audience in such an auditorium! God grant that wisdom and fidelity and earnestness and truth may characterize the "tale that is told."

All the world will yet listen to, and be redeemed by, a "tale that is told." We are all telling it, each in his own way—some by voice, some by pen, some by artist's pencil, some by harp, some by song! mother telling it to child, teacher telling it to Sabbath class, reformer telling it to outcast, preacher telling it to assemblage. The story of the Loveliest of heaven coming down to this scared and blasted island of a world. He was ordered back from its shores and struck through with lances of human hate as soon as he landed. Shepherd's dog bay-ing on the hills that Christian night was better treated than this Rescuer of a race; yet keeping right on, brambles on brow, feet on spikes, flagellated with whips that had lumps of lead fastened to them, through storms without shelter, through years that grew blacker until they ended in a noonday with the sun blotted out. Mightiest tale ever told! and keep on telling it until the last sorrow is assuaged and the last animosity is quelched and the last desert is white with the lily and golden with the cowslip and blue with the gentian and crimson with the rose.

The story of life will end when the group breaks up. The "tale that is told" stops when the listeners depart. Sometimes we have been in groups interestedly listening to some story told when other engagements or the hour of the night demanded the going of the guests. That stopped the story. These earthly groups will break up. No family group or political group stays long together. Suppose some one should take from the national archives

the roll of the United States Senate chamber or the roll of the House of Representatives, as it was made up twenty years ago, and then call the roll. The silence would be mightier than the voices that would hear and respond.

The family group breaks up. Did you ever know a household that for twenty-five years remained intact? Not one. Was there ever a church record the same after the passage of twenty-five years or fifteen years or ten years? The fact is that the story of our life will soon end, because the group of listeners will be gone. So you see if we are going to give the right trend and emphasis, we must give it right away. If there are old people in the group of our influence, all we can do for them will be in five or ten years. If there are children around us, in ten or fifteen years they will no longer be children, and they will be fashioning the story of their own life. "What thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." Passing all, passing everything, as a "tale that is told."

XIII

What Were You Made For?

There is too much divine skill shown in the physical, mental and moral constitution of the ordinary human being to suppose that he was constructed without any divine purpose. If you take me out on some vast plain and show me a pillared temple, surmounted by a dome like St. Peter's and having a floor of precious stones, and arches that must have taxed the brain of the greatest draughtsman to design, and walls scrolled and niched and paneled and wainscoted and painted, and I should ask you what this building was put up for, and you answered: "For nothing at all," how could I believe you? And it is impossible for me to believe that any ordinary human being who has in his muscular, nervous and cerebral organization more wonder than Christopher Wren lifted in St. Paul's, or Phidias ever chiseled on the Acropolis, was constructed for no purpose, and to execute no mission, and without any divine intention toward some end. My object is to help you find your sphere and assist you into that condition where you can say with certainty and emphasis and enthusiasm and triumph: "To this end was I born."

First I discharge you from all responsibility for most of your environments. You are not responsible for your parentage or grand-parentage. You are not responsible for any of the cranks that may have lived in your ancestral line, and who a hundred years before you were born may have lived a style of life that more or less affects you to-day. You are not responsible for the fact

that your temperament is sanguine or melancholic or bilious or lymphatic or nervous. Neither are you responsible for the place of your nativity, whether among the granite hills of New England or the cotton plantations of Louisiana or on the banks of the Clyde or the Seine. Neither are you responsible for the religion taught in your father's house or the irreligion. Do not bother about circumstances you cannot help, that you did not decree. Take things as they are, and decide the question so that you shall be able to say: "To this end was I born."

How will you decide it? By direct application to the only Being in the universe who is competent to tell you—the Lord Almighty. Do you know the reason why he is the only one who can tell? Because he can see everything between your cradle and your grave, though the grave be eighty years off. And besides that, he is the only being who can see what has been happening for the last five hundred years in your ancestral line and for thousands of years clear back to Adam, and there is not one person in all that ancestral line but has somehow affected your character, and even old Adam himself will sometimes turn up in your disposition. The only being who can take all things that pertain to you into consideration is God, and he is the one you can ask. Life is so short we have no time to experiment with occupations and professions. The reason we have so many dead failures is that parents decide for children what they shall do, or children themselves, wrought on by some whim or fancy, decide for themselves without any imploration of divine guidance. So we have now in our pulpits men making sermons who ought to be in blacksmith shops making plowshares, and we have in the law those who instead of ruining the cases of their clients ought to be pounding shoe lasts, and doctors who are the worst hindrances to their patients' convalescence, and

artists trying to paint landscapes who ought to be white-washing board fences, while there are others making bricks who ought to be remodeling constitutions, or shoving planes who ought to be transforming literature. Ask God about what worldly business you shall undertake until you are so positive you can in earnestness smite your hand on your plow handle, or your carpenter's bench, or your Blackstone's *Commentaries*, or your medical dictionary or your Doctor Dick's *Didactic Theology*, saying: "For this end was I born."

There are children who early develop natural affinities for certain styles of work. When the father of the astronomer Forbes was going to London, he asked his children what present he should bring each one of them. The boy who was to be an astronomer cried out, "Bring me a telescope." And there are children whom you find all by themselves drawing on their slates or on paper ships, or houses, or birds, and you know they are to be draughtsmen or artists of some kind. And you find others ciphering out difficult problems with rare interest and success and you know they are to be mathematicians. When Abbé de Rancé had so advanced in studying Greek that he could translate Anacreon at twelve years of age, there was no doubt left that he was intended for a scholar.

But in almost every lad there comes a time when he does not know what he was made for, and his parents do not know, and it is a crisis that God only can decide. There are those born for some special work and their fitness does not develop until quite late. Some of those who have been characterized for their stupidity in boyhood or girlhood have turned out the mightiest benefactors or benefactresses of the human race. These things being so, am I not right in saying that in many cases God only knows what is the most appropriate thing

for you to do, and he is the one to ask. And let all parents and all schools and all universities and all colleges recognize this, and a large number of those who spend their best years in stumbling about among businesses and occupations, now trying this and now trying that and failing in all, would be able to go ahead with a definite, decided and tremendous purpose, saying, "To this end was I born."

What has the world a right to expect of you? What has God a right to demand of you? God is the greatest of economists in the universe, and he makes nothing uselessly, and for what purpose did he build your body, mind and soul as they are built? There are only two beings in the universe who can answer that question. The angels do not know. The schools do not know. Your kindred cannot certainly know. God knows and you ought to know.

There's some path of Christian usefulness open. It may be a rough path, or it may be a smooth path, a long path or a short path. It may be on a mount of conspicuity, or in a valley unobserved, but it is a path on which you can start with such faith and such satisfaction and such certainty that you can cry out in the face of earth and hell and heaven: "To this end was I born."

Do not wait for extraordinary qualifications. Philip the Conqueror gained his greatest victories seated on a mule, and if you wait for some caparisoned Bucephalus to ride into the conflict you will never get into the world-wide fight at all. Samson slew the Lord's enemies with the jawbone of the stupidest beast created. Under God, spittle cured the blind man's eyes in the New Testament story. Take all the faculty you have and say: "O Lord! Here is what I have, show me the field and back me up by omnipotent power. Anywhere, anyhow, any time for God."

I started for the law without asking any divine direction. I consulted my own tastes. I liked lawyers and court-rooms and judges and juries, and as assistant of the county clerk at sixteen years of age I searched titles, naturalized foreigners, recorded deeds, swore witnesses and juries and grand juries. But after a while I felt a call to the Gospel ministry and entered it, and I felt some satisfaction in the work. But one summer, when I was resting at Sharon Springs, and while seated in the park of that village, I said to myself, "If I have an especial work to do in the world I ought to find it out now," and with that determination I prayed as I had never before prayed and got the divine direction and wrote it down in my memorandum book; I saw my life-work then as plainly as I see it now. Oh, do not be satisfied with general directions. Get specific directions. Do not shoot at random. Take aim and fire. Concentrate. Napoleon's success in battle came from his theory of breaking through the enemy's ranks at one point, not trying to meet the whole line of the enemy's force by a similar force. One reason why he lost Waterloo was because he did not work his usual theory, but spread his force out over a wide range. O Christian man! O Christian woman! break through somewhere. Not a general engagement for God, but a particular engagement, and made in answer to prayer. If there are sixteen hundred million people in the world, then there are sixteen hundred million different missions to fulfill, different styles of work to do, different orbits in which to revolve, and if you do not get the divine direction there are at least fifteen hundred and ninety-nine million possibilities that you will make a mistake. On your knees before God get the matter settled so that you can firmly say: "To this end was I born."

XIV

Pulpit and Press

I have before me a subject of first and last importance: How shall we secure the secular press as a mightier reënforcement to religion and the pulpit?

The first thing toward this result is cessation of indiscriminate hostility against newspaperdom. You might as well denounce the legal profession because of the shysters, or the medical profession because of the quacks, or merchandise because of the swindling bargain-makers, as to abuse newspapers because there are recreant editors, and unfair reporters, and unclean columns. Gutenberg, the inventor of the art of printing, was about to destroy his types and extinguish the art, because it was suggested to him that printing might be suborned into the service of the devil; but afterward he bethought himself that the right use of the art might more than overcome the evil use of it, and so he spared the types and the intelligence of all following ages. But there are many to-day in the depressed mood of Gutenberg, with uplifted hammer, wanting to pound to pieces the type, who have not reached his better mood in which he saw the art of printing to be the rising sun of the world's illumination. If, instead of fighting newspapers, we spend the same length of time and the same vehemence in marshalling their help in religious direction, we would be as much wiser. The silliest thing that a man ever does is to fight a newspaper, for you may have the floor for utterance perhaps one day in the week while the newspaper has the floor every day in the week. Better wait until the excitement blows

over and then go in and get justice, for get it you will if you have patience and common sense and equipoise of disposition. It ought to be a mighty sedative that there is an enormous amount of common sense in the world, and you will eventually be taken for what you are really worth and you cannot be puffed up and you cannot be written down, and if you are the enemy of good society, that fact will come out, and if you are the friend of good society that fact will be established.

Young men in the ministry, young men in all professions and occupations, wait. You can afford to wait. Take rough misrepresentation as a Turkish towel to start up your languid circulation or a system of massage or Swedish movement, whose pokes and pulls and twists and thrusts are salutary treatment. Keep your disposition sweet by communion with the Christ who answered not again, by the society of genial people, and walk out in the sunshine, and you will come out all right; and do not join the crowd of people in our day who spend much of their time condemning newspapers.

We shall secure the secular press as a mightier reënforcement of religion and the pulpit by making our religious utterances more interesting and spirited and then the press will reproduce them. On my way to church many years ago a journalist said a thing that has kept me ever since thinking: "Are you going to give us any points to-day?" "What do you mean?" I asked. He said: "I mean by that anything that will be striking enough to be remembered." Then I said to myself: What right have we in our pulpits and Sunday Schools to take the time of people if we have nothing to say that is memorable? David did not have any difficulty in remembering Nathan's thrust: "Thou art the man"; nor Felix in remembering Paul's pointblank utterance on righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

The tendency of criticism in the theological seminaries is to file off from our young men all the sharp points and make them too smooth for any kind of execution.

What we all want if we are to make the printing press an ally in Christian work is that which the reporter spoken of suggested—points, sharp points, memorable points. But if the thing be dead when uttered by living voice, it will be a hundredfold more dead when it is laid out in cold type.

That Providence intends the profession of reporters to have a mighty share in the world's redemption is suggested by the fact that Paul and Christ took a reporter along with them, and he reported their addresses and their acts. Luke was a reporter, and he wrote not only the Book of Luke, but the Acts of the Apostles, and without that reporter's work we would have known nothing of the Pentecost, and nothing of Stephen's martyrdom, and nothing of Tabitha's resurrection, and nothing of the jailing and unjailing of Paul and Silas, and nothing of the shipwreck of Melita. Strike out the reporter's work from the Bible and you kill a large part of the New Testament. It makes me think that in the future of the Kingdom of God the reporters are to bear a mighty part.

Side by side be these two potent agencies, pulpit and press, until the Judgment Day, when we must both be scrutinized for our work, healthful or blasting. The two worst off men in that day will be the minister of religion and the editor if they wasted their opportunity. Both of us are the engineers of long express trains of influence, and we will run them into a depot of light or tumble them off the embankments.

Hard Rowing

Navigation in the Mediterranean Sea always was perilous, especially so in early times. Vessels were propelled partly by sail and partly by oar. When by reason of great stress of weather it was necessary to reef the canvas or haul it in, then the vessel was entirely dependent upon the oars, sometimes twenty or thirty of them on each side of the vessel. You would not venture outside Sandy Hook with such a craft as Jonah sailed in, but he had not much choice of vessels. He was running away from the Lord, and when a man is running away from the Lord he has to take risks.

God had told Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach about the destruction of that city. Jonah disobeyed. That always makes rough water, whether in the Mediterranean or the Atlantic or the Pacific or the Caspian Sea or in the Hudson or the East River.

It is a very hard thing to scare sailors. I have seen them when the prow of the vessel was under water and they were walking the deck ankle deep in the surf, and the small boats by the side of the vessel had been crushed as small as kindling wood, whistling as though nothing had happened; but the Bible says that these mariners of whom I speak were frightened. That which sailors call "a lump of a sea" had become a blinding, deafening, swamping fury. How wild the wind can get with the water, and the water can get back at the wind you do not know unless you have been spectators. I have in my house a piece of a sail of a ship no larger than the palm of my

hand; that piece of canvas was all that was left of the largest sail of the ship *Greece*, that went into the storm five hundred miles off Newfoundland one September day. Oh, what a night that was! I suppose that it was in some such storm as this that Jonah was caught.

He knew that the tempest was on his account and he asked the sailors to throw him overboard. Sailors are a generous-hearted race and they resolved to make their escape, if possible, without resorting to such extreme measures. The sails are of no use, and so they lay hold on their oars. I see the long bank of shining blades on each side the vessel. Oh, how they did pull, the bronzed seamen, as they laid back on the oars. But rowing on the sea is very different from rowing upon a river; and as the vessel hoists, the oars skip the wave and miss the stroke, and the tempest laughs to scorn the flying paddles. It is of no use, no use. There comes a wave that crashes the last mast and sweeps the oarsmen from their places and tumbles everything in the confusion of impending shipwreck. "The men rowed hard to bring it to land, but they could not; wherefore they cried unto the Lord."

As those Mediterranean oarsmen trying to bring Jonah ashore were discomfited, I have to tell you that they were not the only men who have broken down on their paddles and have been obliged to call on the Lord for help. I want to say that the unavailing efforts of those Mediterranean oarsmen have a counterpart in the efforts we are making to bring souls to the shore of safety and set their feet on the Rock of Ages.

Oh, there are those who have tried to bring their friends to God! They have been unable to bring them to the shore of safety. They are no nearer that point than they were twenty years ago. You think you have got them almost to the shore, when you are swept back again.

What shall you do? Put down the oar? Oh, no! I do not advise that, but I do advise that you appeal to that God to whom the Mediterranean oarsmen appealed—the God who could silence the tempest and bring the ship in safety to the port. I tell you that there has to be a good deal of praying before our families are brought to Christ. The unavailing efforts of these Mediterranean oarsmen have a counterpart in the efforts some of us are making to bring our children to the shore of safety. There never were so many temptations for young people as there are now. God knows how anxious we are for our children. We cannot think of going into heaven without them. We do not want to leave this life while they are tossed on the waves of temptation and away from God.

The unavailing effort of those Mediterranean oarsmen has a counterpart in every man that is trying to row his own soul into safety. When the eternal Spirit flashes upon us our condition we try to save ourselves. We say: "Give me a stout oar for my right hand, give me a stout oar for my left hand, and let me pull myself into safety." No. A wave of sin comes and dashes one oar away and a wave of temptation comes and dashes you in another way, and there are plenty of rocks on which to founder but seemingly no harbor into which to sail. Sin must be thrown overboard or we must perish. There are men and women who have tried for ten years to become Christians. They believe all I say in regard to a future world. They believe that religion is the first, the last, the infinite necessity. With it heaven! Without it hell! They do everything but trust in Christ. They make sixty strokes in a minute. They bend forward with all earnestness, and they lie back until the muscles are distended and yet they have not made one inch in ten years toward heaven. What is the reason? That is not the way to go to work. You might as well take a frail skiff and put it down at the

foot of Niagara and then head it up toward the churning thunderbolt of waters and expect to work your way up through the lightning of the foam into calm Lake Erie as for you to try to pull yourself through the surf of your sin into the hope and pardon and placidity of the Gospel. You cannot do it in that way. Sin is a rough sea, and longboat, yawl, pinnace, and gondola go down unless the Lord deliver; but if you will cry to Christ and lay hold of divine mercy, you are as safe from eternal condemnation as though you had been twenty years in heaven. You will be lost if you depend on your own power. You cannot do it. No human arm was ever strong enough to unlock the door of heaven. No foot was mighty enough to break the shackles of sin. No one swarthy enough to row himself into God's harbor. The wind is against you. The tide is against you. The Law is against you. Ten thousand corrupting influences are against you. Helpless and undone. Not so helpless a sailor on a plank, mid-Atlantic. Not so helpless a traveler girded by twenty miles of prairie on fire. Prove it, you say. I will prove it. John 6: 44: "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." But while I have shown your helplessness, I want to put by the side of it the power and willingness of Christ to save you.

Though your sin be long and black and inexcusable and outrageous, the very moment you believe he will proclaim pardon—quick, full, grand, unconditional, uncompromising, illimitable, infinite. Oh, the grace of God! I am overwhelmed when I come to think of it. Let the line run out with the anchor until all the cables of earth are exhausted that we may touch the depth. Oh, the grace of God! It is so broad. It is so deep. Glory be to my God, that where man's oar gives out God's arm begins! Why will ye carry your sins and your sorrows

any longer when Christ offers to take them? Why will you wrestle down your fears when this moment you might give up and be saved? Do you know that everything is ready? Ye who are swamped by the breakers around you cry to Christ to pilot you into smooth, still waters.

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XVI

Noontide of Life

Life at the meridian. The prayer, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon," is appropriate for me to offer and for many of you to offer. Noonday privilege. Noonday joy. Noonday reflection.

While in early life we are climbing up the steep hillside, we have worries and frets, and we slip and fall and slide back and run upon sharp antagonisms, and all the professions and occupations have drudgeries and sharp rivalries at the start. We are afraid we will not be properly appreciated. We toil on, and we pant and we struggle and we are out of breath, and sometimes we are tempted to lie down in the bower of lazy indulgence. In addition to these difficulties of climbing the hill of life there are those who rejoice in setting a man back and trying to make a young man cow down. Every young man has twenty disheartenments where he has one round word of good cheer. But after we have climbed to the top of the hill of life, then we have comparative tranquillity and repose. We begin to look about us. We find that it is just three miles from cradle to grave: youth the first mile, manhood the second mile, old age the third mile. Standing on the hill-top of the journey of life in the second mile, having come up one side of the hill and before I go down the other side I want to tell you that life is to me a happiness and much of the time it has been a rapture, and sometimes an ecstasy.

The first thing a traveler does after climbing up to the

top of a mountain is to take a long breath, and then look about and see what is all around him. Standing on the hill-top of life's journey, I put my outspread hand to my forehead so as to keep off the glare of the noonday sun and to concentrate my vision, and I look back on the winding road on which I have traveled and I see far on down at the foot of that road, in the dim distance, something small, something insignificant, and it vibrates and it trembles and it rocks. I wonder what it is. I guess what it is. A cradle! Then I turn, and still keeping my outspread hand to my forehead so as to shade my eyes from the glare of the noonday sun and to concentrate my vision, I look on the winding road down which I shall travel, and I see at the foot of the road something that does not tremble, it does not vibrate, does not rock, and then near it a bank of the earth, and I wonder what it is. Ah, I see what it is. I know what it is. A grave. So, standing on the hill-top, having come up one side of the hill and before I go down the other side, you ask me two or three questions, and I tell you what I have learned coming up this side of life—the steep side, the first side. I have learned that nothing is accomplished without hard work. Although I have been prospered to an exceptional degree, I never had any good luck. I have heard people talk a good deal about streaks of good luck. In all my life I never had one streak of good luck. But I have had a good God watching me, correcting my mistakes, and he has always blessed me when I worked hard, and he did not bless me so much when I was lazy! Whether my work has amounted to anything or not I must leave for others to judge; but during the past twenty-nine years I have worked to my full capacity of endurance. I am afraid of indolence—as afraid of indolence as any reformed inebriate is afraid of the wine-cup. He knows if he takes one glass he will be flung back into inebriety.

And I am afraid if I should take one long pull of nothing to do I would stop forever. So I keep busy all the time. And I say to the multitude of young people starting in occupations and professions, nothing is accomplished without work, hard work, continuous work, all-absorbing work, everlasting work.

I have learned also, in coming up this steep hill of life, that all events are connected. I look back and now see events which I thought were isolated and alone, but I find now they were adjoined to everything that went before and everything that came after. The chain of life is made up of a great many links—large links, small links, silver links, iron links, beautiful links, ugly links, mirthful links, solemn links—but they are all parts of one great chain of destiny. Each minute is made up of sixty links, and each day is made up of twenty-four links, and each year is made up of three hundred and sixty-five links; but they are all parts of one endless chain which plays and works through the hand of an all-governing God. No event stands alone. Sometimes you say: "This is my day off." You never will have a day off. Nothing is off.

But if you continue to ask me how the past seems, I answer it seems like three or four picture-galleries—Düsseldorf, Louvre and Luxembourg—their corridors interjoining. Boyhood gallery, church gallery, home gallery. Boyhood gallery in my memory. I close my eyes and see them coasting the hillside and flying the kite and trundling the hoop and gathering nuts in the autumnal forests, and then a little while after bending in anxious study over the lexicons and the trigonometries. Where are those comrades? Most of them gone. Some are in useful spheres on earth. Some died in rapture and a good many of them perished in dissipation before thirty years of age. The wine cup with its sharp edge cut the jugular

vein of their soul. Poor fellows! They tried the world without God, and the world was too much for them. Splendid fellows! Oh, what forehead they had for brain, and what muscle they had for strength, and what gleam of eye they had for genius, and what loving letters they got from home, and how they carried off the bouquets on Commencement Day! But they made the terrific mistake of thinking religion a superfluity, and now they are in my memory, not so much canvas as sculpture—some Laocoön struggling with snapped muscles and eyes starting from the sockets from torture; struggling amid the crushing folds of a serpentine monstrosity, a reptile horror, a Laocoön worse than that of the ancients. Satan has a fastidious appetite, and the vulgar souls he throws into a trough to fatten his swine; but he says: “Bring to my golden plate all the fine natures, bring to my golden plate all the clear intellects, bring them to me. My knife will cut down through the lusciousness; fill my chalice with the richest of their blood; pour it in until it comes three-fourths full; pour it in until the blood bubbles over the rim. Let the common demons have the vulgar souls, but give me, who am the king of all diabolism, the holiest and gladdest and the grandest of all this immortal sacrifice!”

There is another picture gallery in my mind, the church gallery, the people to whom I have ministered in the Gospel and who are gone now to a better country. Some of these figures in the gallery have frame of hosanna and hallelujah. Sweet spirits, glorious spirits, transported spirits, blessed spirits! Dying children with faces like that in Raphael’s “Madonna.” Octogenarians with patriarchal demeanor and a look which makes me think that Elijah, having arrived, sent back his flaming equipage to bring up another passenger. Fair maidens in death looking like a transfiguration. Young men dying with

anthem on the lip and flash of pearline portal in the eye.

Then in my mind there is the home gallery. Oh, those dear faces, old faces, and young faces, faces that have lost nothing of their loveliness by the recession of years, faces into which we looked when we sat on their laps, faces that looked up to us when they sat on our laps, faces that wept, faces that laughed, faces wrinkled with old age, faces all a-flush with juvenile jocundity, faces that have disappeared, faces gone.

But you ask me how the rest of the journey appears to me. As I look down now, having come up one side, and standing on the hill-top, and before I take the other journey, let me say to you, the road yet to be traveled seems to me brighter than the one on which I have journeyed. I would not want to live life over again as some wish to. If we lived over again we would do no better than we have done. Our lives have been lived over five hundred times. We saw five hundred people make mistakes in life and we went right on and made the same mistakes. Our life was not the first. There were five hundred or a thousand people living before us whose blunders were known to us. We did not profit by their example. We went right on and broke down in the same place, and if we did not do any better with those experiences before us, do you think we would do any better if we tried life over again? No. I should rather go right on. If we tried life over again we would repeat the same journey.

"But," says some one, "don't you know there may be trials, hardships, sickness, and severe duties ahead?" Oh, yes; but if I am on a railroad journey of a thousand miles, and I have gone five hundred of the miles, and during those five hundred miles I have found the bridges safe and the track solid and the conductors competent and the engineer wide awake, does not that give me con-

fidence for the other five hundred miles? God has seen me through up to this time, and I am going to trust him for the rest of the journey. I believe I have a through ticket, and although sometimes the track may turn this way and the other way, and sometimes we may be plunged through tunnels, and sometimes we may switch off upon a side track to let somebody else pass, and sometimes we may see a red flag warning us to slow up, I believe we are going through to the right place. I put all my case in God's hands and I have not any anxiety about the future. I do not feel foolhardy. I only trust. And—for there are those of my own age—let me say, when we come to duties, and trials, and hardships, God is going to see us through.

We may have a great many anxieties about what is to come in life, and we may tremble about the great responsibility, but when we come to the right place God will steady our hand, he will take hold of us, he will give us courage, and without any perturbation we will go right through. All I want to know is that God has my hand and is helping me on. And beside that, notwithstanding all the balderdash of infidels and atheists and free-thinkers in our time, I am quite certain—I am very certain—that right beyond this life is another life. The three miles of this journey from cradle to grave are not an inch long compared with that other life which then will begin, and the picture-gallery ahead is brighter than the picture-gallery in the rear. May we take the best of those pictures from the gallery in the rear and on step-ladder of amethyst we go up and with loops of celestial light we hang those pictures against the burnished wall of heaven.

From this hill-top of life catch a glimpse of those hill-tops where all sorrow and sighing shall be done away. Oh, that God would make that world to us a reality.

XVII

Scroll of Heroes

Historians are not slow to acknowledge the merits of great military chieftains. We have the full-length portraits of the Washingtons, the Napoleons, the Wellingtons, the Baldwins, the Cromwells, and the Marshal Neys of the world. History is not written in black ink, but with red ink of human blood. The gods of human ambition did not drink from bowls made out of silver or gold or precious stones, but out of the bleached skulls of the fallen. But I am to-day to unroll before you a scroll of heroes whom the world has never acknowledged; they who faced no guns, blew no bugle-blast, conquered no cities, chained no captives to their chariot-wheels, and yet in the great day of eternity will stand higher than those whose names startled the nations; and seraph and rapt spirit and archangel will tell their deeds to a listening universe. I mean the heroes of everyday life.

In this roll, in the first place, I find all the heroes of the sick room. When Satan had failed to overcome Job, he said to God: "Put forth thy hand and touch his bone and his flesh and he will curse thee to thy face." Satan had found out what we have all found out, that sickness is the greatest test of character. A man who can stand that can stand anything: to be shut in a room as fast as though it were a Bastille; to be so nervous you cannot endure the tap of a child's foot; to have rapier of pain strike through the temples like a razor, or to put the foot into a vise, or to throw the whole body into the blaze of a

fever. Yet there are men and women, but more women than men, who have cheerfully endured this hardness. Those who suffered on the battle field amid shot and shell were not so much heroes and heroines as those who in the field-hospital and in the asylum had fevers no ice could cool and no surgery could cure. No shout of companion to cheer them, but numbness and aching and homesickness, yet willing to suffer, confident in God, hopeful of heaven. Heroes of rheumatism; heroes of neuralgia; heroes of spinal complaint; heroes of sick headache; heroes of lifelong invalidism; heroes and heroines; they shall reign forever and ever. Hark! I catch just one note of the eternal anthem: "There shall be no more pain." Bless God for that.

In this roll I also find the heroes of toil, who do their work uncomplainingly. It is comparatively easy to lead a regiment into battle when you know that the whole nation will applaud the victory; it is comparatively easy to doctor the sick when you know that your skill will be appreciated by a large company of friends and relatives; it is comparatively easy to address an audience when in the gleaming eyes and the flushed cheeks you know that your sentiments are adopted; but to do sewing where you expect that the employer will come and thrust his thumb through the work to show how imperfect it is, or to have the whole garment thrown back to be done over again; to build a wall and know there will be no one to say you did it well, but only a swearing employer howling across the scaffold; to work until your eyes are dim and your back aches and your heart faints, and to know that if you stop before night your children will starve—that is heroism.

In this roll I also find the heroes who have uncomplainingly endured domestic injustices. There are men who for their toil and anxiety have no sympathy in their

homes. Society to-day is strewn with the wrecks of men who under the northeast storm of domestic infelicity have been driven on the rocks. That is not poetry; that is prose!

But the wrong is generally in the opposite direction. You would not have to go far to find a wife whose life is a perpetual martyrdom—something heavier than a stroke of the fist, unkind words, the companionship of a brute staggering home at midnight, and constant maltreatment which have left her only a wreck of what she was on that day when in the midst of a brilliant assemblage the vows were taken and full organ played the wedding-march and the carriage rolled away with the blessing of the people. What was the burning of Latimer and Ridley at the stake compared to this? O ye who are twisting a garland for the victor! put it on that pale brow.

I find also in this roll the heroes of Christian charity—those who out of their pinched poverty help others—of such are the missionaries of the West. And of those people who have only a half loaf of bread, but give a piece of it to others who are more hungry; and of those who have only a scuttle of coal, but help others to fuel. You may not know where they live or what their name is. God knows and they have more angels hovering over them than you and I have, and they will have a higher seat in heaven. Considering what they had, they did more than we have ever done, and their faded dress will become a white robe, and the small room will be an eternal mansion, when God rises up to give his reward to those humble workers in his kingdom and to say to them: "Well done, good and faithful servant." Oh, what a grand thing it will be in the last day to see God pick out his heroes and heroines! Who are those paupers of eternity trudging off from the gate of heaven? Who are they? The Herods and the Lord Jeffreyses of the earth.

They had scepters and they had crowns and they had thrones, but they lived for their own aggrandizement, and they broke the heart of nations. Heroes of earth but paupers in eternity! I beat the drums of their eternal despair. Woe! Woe! Woe!

Go home to the place just where God has put you to play the hero or heroine. Do not envy any man his money or his applause or his social position. Do not envy any woman her wardrobe or her exquisite appearance. Be the hero or the heroine.

Get up out of your discouragement, O troubled soul, O ye who are hard bested in the battle of life and know not which way to turn, O you bereft one, O you sick one with complaints you have told to no one! Come and get comfort from this subject. Listen to our great Captain's cheer: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the fruit of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

XVIII

Is Life Worth Living?

If we leave to the evolutionists to guess where we came from and to the theologians to prophesy where we are going to, we still have left for consideration the important fact that we are here. There may be some doubt about where the river rises and some doubt about where the river empties, but there can be no doubt about the fact that we are sailing on it. So I am not surprised that everybody asks the question, "Is life worth living?"

How are we to decide this matter righteously and intelligently? You will find the same man vacillating, oscillating in his opinion from dejection to exuberance, and if he be very mercurial in his temperament it will depend very much upon which way the wind blows. If the wind blows from the northeast and you ask him, he will say, "No." If it blow from the northwest he will say, "Yes." How then are we to get the question righteously answered?

If you ask me, "Is life worth living?" I answer, it all depends upon the kind of life you live. A life of mere money getting is always a failure, because you will never get as much as you want. The poorest people in this country are the millionaires, and next to them those who have half a million. There is not a scissors grinder on the streets of New York that is so anxious to make money as these men who have piled up fortunes year after year in storehouses, in government securities, in tenement houses, in whole city blocks. You ought to see them jump

when they hear the fire bell. You ought to see them in their excitement when some well-known bank explodes. You ought to see their agitation when there is proposed a reformation in the tariff. Their nerves tremble like harp-strings, but there is no music in the vibrations.

They read the reports from Wall street in the morning paper with a concernment that threatens paralysis or apoplexy or, more probably, they have a telegraph or telephone in their house, so they catch every breath of change in the money-market. The disease of accumulation has eaten into them.

That is not a life worth living. There are too many earthquakes in it, too many agonies in it, too many perditions in it. They build their castles, and they open their picture galleries, and they summon prima donnas, and they offer every inducement for happiness to come and live there, but happiness will not come.

A man who spends his life with the one dominant idea of financial accumulation spends a life not worth living. So if the idea of worldly approval be dominant in a man's life, he is miserable. The most unfortunate men in this country for the six months preceding a general election are the two men nominated for the Presidency.

What you see in the matter of high political preferment you see in every community in the struggle for what is called social position. Tens of thousands of people are trying to get into that realm, and they are under terrific tension.

What is social position? It is difficult to define, but we all know what it is. Good morals and intelligence are not necessary, but wealth or show of wealth is absolutely indispensable. There are men to-day as notorious for their libertinism as the night is famous for its darkness who move in what is called high social position. There are hundreds of out-and-out rakes in American society

whose names are mentioned among the distinguished guests at the great social levees. They have annexed all the known vices and longing for other worlds of diabolism to conquer. Good morals are not necessary in many of the exalted circles of society. Neither is intelligence necessary. You find in that realm men who would not know an adverb from an adjective if they met it a hundred times a day and who could not write a letter of acceptance or regret without the aid of a secretary. They buy their libraries by the square yard, only anxious to have the binding Russian leather. Their ignorance is positively sublime, making English grammar almost disreputable.

A life of sin, a life of pride, a life of indulgence, a life of worldliness, a life devoted to the world, the flesh and the devil is a failure, a dead failure, an infinite failure.

I will show you a life that is worth the living. A young man says: "I am here. I am not responsible for my ancestry. I am not responsible for temperament; God gave that to me. But here I am in the afternoon of the twentieth century at twenty years of age. I am here and I must take an account of stock. Here I have a body which is a divinely constructed engine. I must put it to the very best uses, and I must allow nothing to damage this rare machinery. Two eyes, and they mean capacity to pick out my own way. Two ears, and they are telephones of communication with all the outside world, and they mean capacity to catch sweetest music and the voices of friendship, the very best music. A tongue, with almost infinity of articulation. Yes, hands with which to welcome, or resist, or lift, or smite, or wave, or bless—hands to help myself and help others. Here is a world which after six thousand years of battling with tempest and accident is still grander than any human architect could have drafted. I have two lamps to light me—a

silver and a golden lamp—a golden lamp set on the sapphire mantle of the day, a silver lamp set on the jet mantle of the night. Yea, I have that at twenty years of age which defies all inventory of valuables—a soul with capacity to choose or reject or rejoice or to suffer, to love or to hate. Plato says it is immortal. Seneca says it is immortal. Confucius says it is immortal. An old book with leathern cover almost worn out, and pages almost obliterated by oft perusal, joins the other books in saying I am immortal. I may not live an hour, but then I must lay out my plans intelligently and for a long life.”

That young man enters life. He is buffeted, he is tried, he is perplexed. A grave opens on this side and a grave opens on that side. He falls, but he rises again. He gets into a hard battle, but he gets the victory. The main course of his life is in the right direction. He blesses everybody he comes in contact with. God forgives his mistakes and makes everlasting record of his holy endeavors. I care not whether that man dies at thirty, forty, sixty, or eighty years of age; you can chisel right under his name on the tombstone these words: “His life was worth living.”

Amid the hills of New Hampshire, in olden times, there sits a mother. There are six children in the household—four girls and two boys. Small farm. Very rough, hard work to coax out a living. Mighty tug to make the two ends of the year meet. Mother is the chief presiding spirit. There is only one musical instrument in the house—the spinning wheel. The food is very plain, but it is well provided. The winters are very cold, but are kept out by the blankets she quilted. Some years go by, and the boys want a college education, and the household economies are severer, and calculations are closer; until those boys get their education there is a hard battle for bread. Do you think her life was worth living? A

life for God, a life for others, a life of unselfishness, a useful life, a Christian life is always worth living.

Ah! my friends, whether you live a life conspicuous or inconspicuous, it is worth living if you live aright. You are to be rewarded according to the holy industries with which you employ the talents you really possessed. The majority of the crowns of heaven will not be given to people with ten talents, for most of them were tempted only to serve themselves. The vast majority of the crowns of heaven will be given to people who had one talent, but gave it all to God. Your life, if rightly lived, is the first bar of an eternal oratorio, and who despises the first note of Haydn's symphonies? And the life you live now is all the more worth living because it opens into that life that shall never end, and the last letter of the word "time" is the first letter of the word "eternity"!

XIX

Grandmothers

Paul wrote a letter to Timothy. Timothy needed encouragement, so Paul encouraged him spiritually by the recital of grandmotherly excellence, hinting to him as I hint to you that God sometimes gathers up as in a reservoir away back of the active generations of to-day a godly influence, and then in response to prayer lets it down upon children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The world is woefully in want of a table of statistics as to what is the protractedness and immensity of influence of one good woman in the church and the world. We have accounts of how much evil has been wrought by Margaret, the mother of criminals, who lived nearly one hundred years ago, and how many hundreds of criminals her descendants furnished for the penitentiaries and the gallows. But will some one come out with brain comprehensible enough and heart warm enough and pen keen enough to give the facts in regard to some good woman of one hundred years ago, and let us know how many Christian men and women and reformers and useful people have been found among her descendants, and how many asylums and colleges and churches they have built, and how many millions of dollars they have contributed for humanitarian and Christian purposes?

The good women whose tombstones were planted in the eighteenth century are more alive for good in the nineteenth than they were before, as the good women of this nineteenth century will be more alive for good in the twentieth century than they are now. Mark you, I

have no idea that the grandmothers were any better than their granddaughters. You cannot get very old people to talk much about how things were when they were boys and girls. They have a reticence and non-committalism which makes me think they feel themselves to be the custodians of the reputations of their early comrades.

There was a glorious race of godly women seventy and a hundred years ago who held back the world from sin and lifted it toward virtue, and without their exalted and sanctified influence much good would have perished from the earth. Indeed, all over this land there are seated to-day—not so much in churches, for many are too feeble to come—a great many aged grandmothers.

I never knew the joy of having a grandmother; that is the disadvantage of being the youngest child of the family. The elder members only have that benediction. But though she went up out of this life before I began it, I have heard of her faith in God that brought all her children into the kingdom, and two of them into the ministry, and brought all her grandchildren into the kingdom, myself the last and least worthy. Is it not time that you and I do two things, swing open a picture gallery of the wrinkled faces and stooped shoulders of the past and call down from their heavenly thrones the godly grandmothers to give them thanks, and then persuade the mothers of to-day that they are living for all time, and that against the sides of every cradle in which a child is rocked beat the two eternities.

Do not let the grandmothers any longer think that they are retired and sit way back out of sight from the world, feeling that they have no relation to it. The descendants of the mothers of the last century are to-day in the senates, the parliaments, the palaces, the pulpits, the banking houses, the professional chairs, the prisons, the almshouses, the company of midnight brigands, the cel-

lars, the ditches of this century. You have been thinking about the importance of getting two little feet on the right path. You have been thinking of your child's destiny for the next eighty years if it should pass on to be an octogenarian. That is well, but my subject sweeps a thousand years, a million years, a quadrillion of years. I cannot stop at one cradle. I am looking at the cradles that reach all round the world and across all time. The only way you can tell the force of a current is by sailing up-stream; or the force of an ocean wave by running the ship against it. Running along with it we cannot appreciate its force. Let us come up to the mother's influence from the eternity side, after it has been working on for centuries, and see all the good it has done, and all the evil it has accomplished, multiplied in magnificent or appalling interest. The difference between that mother's influence now, and the influence when it has been multiplied in hundreds of thousands of lives is the difference between the Mississippi River way up at the top of the continent, starting from the little Lake Itasca, seven miles long and one wide, and its mouth at the Gulf of Mexico, where navies might ride. Between the birth of that river and its burial in the sea the Missouri pours in, and the Ohio pours in, and the Arkansas pours in, and the Red and White and Yazoo Rivers pour in, and all the States and Territories between the Allegheny and Rocky Mountains make contribution. Now to test the power of a mother's influence we need to come in off the ocean of eternity and sail up towards the one cradle, and we will find ten thousand tributaries of influence pouring in and pouring down.

But it is, after all, one great river of power rolling on and rolling forever. Who can fathom it? Who can bridge it? Who can stop it? Had not mothers better be intensifying their prayers? Had they not better be

rousing themselves with consideration that by their faithfulness or neglect they are starting an influence which will be stupendous after the last mountain of earth is flat, and the last sea has been dried up, and the last flake of the ashes of a consumed world shall have been blown away, and all the telescopes of other worlds directed to the track around which our world once swung shall discover not so much as a cinder of the burned down and swept-off planet.

Good or bad influence may skip one generation or two generations, but it will be sure to land in the third or fourth generation, just as the Ten Commandments, speaking of the visitation of God on families, says nothing about the second generation, but entirely skips the second and speaks of the third and fourth generations: "Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Parental influence right or wrong may jump over a generation but it is sure to appear further on. Timothy's ministry was projected by his grandmother, Lois. There are men and women, the sons and daughters of the Christian Church, who are such as a result of the consecration of the great-great-grandmothers. Why, who do you think the Lord is? You talk as though his memory was weak. He can no easier remember a prayer five minutes than he can five centuries.

This explains what we often see—some man or woman distinguished for benevolence when the father and mother were distinguished for penuriousness; or you see some young man or woman with a bad father and hard mother come out gloriously for Christ and make the Church sob and shout and sing under his exhortations. We stand in the vestry and whisper over the matter, and say: "How is this, such great piety in sons and daughters of such parental worldliness and sin." I will explain it to you if

you will bring me the old family Bible containing the full record. Let some septuagenarian look with me clear upon the page of births and marriages, and tell me who that woman was with the old fashioned name of Jemima, or Betsy, or Mehitabel. Ah, there she is, the old grandmother or great-grandmother, who had enough religion to saturate a century.

God will fill the earth and the heavens with such grandmothers; we must some day go up and thank these dear old souls. Surely God will let us go up and tell them the result of their influence. We must see those women of the early nineteenth century, and of the eighteenth century, the answer of whose prayers is in our welfare to-day. God bless all the aged women up and down the land and in all lands!

XX

The Capstone

There is profound satisfaction in the completion of anything we have undertaken. We lift the capstone with exultation. While on the other hand there is nothing more disappointing than, after having toiled in a certain direction, to find that our investment is profitless and our time wasted. Christ came to throw up a highway on which the whole world might, if it chose, mount to heaven. He did it. The foul-mouthed crew who attempted to tread on him could not extinguish the sublime satisfaction which he expressed when he said, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

In carrying this business to a successful issue the difficulties were stupendous. In many of our plans we have our friends to help us; some to draw a sketch of the plan, others to help us in the execution. But Christ fought every inch of his way against bitter hostility and amid circumstances all calculated to depress and defeat. In the first place his worldly occupation was against him. I find that he earned his livelihood by the carpenter's trade—an occupation always to be highly regarded and respected. But know that in order to succeed in any employment one must give his entire time to it. A weary body is an unfavorable adjunct to a toiling mind. You whose life is purely mechanical, if you were called to the upbuilding of a kingdom, or the proclamation of a new code of morals, or the starting of a revolution which should upturn all nations, could get some idea of the un-

congeniality of Christ's worldly occupation with his heavenly mission.

So also his habits of dress and of diet were against him. The mighty men of Christ's time did not appear in apparel without trinkets and without adornments. None of the Cæsars would have appeared in citizen's apparel. Yet here was a man, here was a professed king who always wore the same coat. Indeed it was far from shabby, for after he had worn it a long while the gamblers thought it worth raffling about; but still it was far from being an imperial robe. It was a coat that any ordinary man might have worn on an ordinary occasion.

Neither was there any pretension in his diet. No cup-bearer with golden chalice brought him wine to drink. On the seashore he ate fish, having first broiled it himself. No one brought him water to drink, but bending over the well in Samaria he begged a drink. He sat at only one banquet, and that not at all sumptuous, for to relieve the awkwardness of the host one of the guests had to prepare wine for the company. Other kings ride a chariot; he walked. Other kings as they advance have heralds ahead and applauding subjects behind; Christ's retinue was made up of sunburned fishermen. Other kings sleep under embroidered canopies; this one on a sheltered hill. Riding but once—as far as I now remember—on a colt, and that borrowed.

Again his poverty was against him. It requires money to build great enterprises. Men of means are afraid of a penniless projector, lest a loan be demanded. It requires money to print books, to build institutions, to pay instructors. No wonder the wise men of Christ's time laughed at this penniless Christ. "Why," they said, "who is to pay for this new religion? Who is to charter the ships to carry the missionaries? Who is to pay the salaries of the teachers? Shall wealthy Judaism be dis-

comfited by a penniless Christ?" The consequence was that most of the people who followed Christ had nothing to lose. Wealthy Joseph of Arimathea buried Christ but he risked no social position in doing that. It is always safe to bury a dead man! Well-to-do Zacchæus risked no wealth or social position in following Christ, but took a position in a tree to look down as he passed. Nicodemus, wealthy Nicodemus, risked nothing of social position in following Christ, for he skulked by night to find him.

All this was against Christ. So the fact that he was not regularly graduated was against him. If a man comes with the diploma of colleges and schools and theological seminaries, and he has been through foreign travel, the world is disposed to listen. Here was a man who had graduated at no college, had not in any academy by ordinary means learned the alphabet of the language which he spoke, and yet he proposed to instruct in subjects which had confounded the mightiest intellects. John says: "The Jews marveled, saying, how hath this man letters, having never learned?" We in our day have found out that a man without a diploma may know as much as a man with one, and that a college cannot transform a sluggard into a philosopher, or a theological seminary teach a fool to preach. An empty head after the laying on of the hands of the presbytery is empty still. But it shocked all existing prejudices in those olden times for a man with no scholastic pretension and no graduation from a learned institution to set himself up for a teacher. It was all against him.

So also the brevity of his life was against him. He had not come to what we call mid-life. But very few men do anything before thirty-three years of age. The first fifteen years you take in nursery and school. Then it will take you at least six years to get into your occu-

pation or profession. That will bring you to twenty-one years. Then it will take you ten years at least to get established in your life-work correcting the mistakes you have made. If any man at thirty-three years of age gets fully established in his life-work he is the exception. Yet that is the point at which Christ's life terminated. Men in military life have done their most wonderful deeds before thirty-three years. There may be exceptions to it; but the most wonderful exploits in military prowess have occurred before thirty-three years of age. But as a legislator—no man becomes eminent as a legislator until he has had long years of experience. And yet the gray-bearded scribes were expected to bow down in silence before this young legislator who arraigned Sanhedrins and accused governments. Aristotle was old; Lycurgus was old; Seneca was old. Christ was young. All this was against him. If a child twelve years of age should get up in your presence to discuss great questions of metaphysics or ethics or politics or government you would not be more contemptuous than these gray-bearded scribes in the presence of this young Christ. Popular opinion in those days declared: "Blessed is the merchant who has a castle down on the banks of Lake Tiberius." This young man said: "Blessed are the poor." Popular opinion said in those days: "Blessed are those who live amid statuary and fountains and gardens and congratulations and all kinds of festivity." This young man responded: "Blessed are they that mourn." Popular opinion said: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." In other words, if a man knocks out your eye, knock his out. If a man breaks your tooth, break his. Retort for retort; sarcasm for sarcasm; irony for irony; persecution for persecution; wound for wound. Christ said: "Pray for them that despitefully use you." They looked at his eye; it was like any other man's eye, except perhaps more

speaking. They felt of his hand, made of bone and muscle and nerves and flesh just like any other hand. Yet what bold treatments of subjects, what supernatural demand, what strange doctrine! They felt the solid earth under them, and yet Christ said: "I bear up the pillars of this world." They looked at the moon. He said: "I will turn it into blood." They looked at the sea. He said: "I will hush it." They looked at the stars. He said: "I will shake them down like untimely figs." Did ever one so young say things so bold! It was all against him.

Again I remark there was no visible organization in his behalf, and that was against him. When men propose any great work they band together; they write letters of agreement; they take oaths of fealty; and the more and complete the organization the more and complete success. Here was one who went out alone without any organization. If men had a mind to join his company, all right; if they had not a mind to join in his company, all well. If they came they were greeted with no loud salutation; if they went away they were sent with no bitter anathema. Peter departed, and Christ turned and looked at him. That was all.

All this was against him. Did any one ever undertake such an enterprise amid such infinite embarrassments and by such modes? And yet I am here to say that it ended in a complete triumph. Notwithstanding his worldly occupation, his poverty, his plain face, his unpretending garb, the fact that he was school-less, the fact that he had a brief life—notwithstanding all that he utters in an exhilaration which shall be prolonged in everlasting chorals: "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do."

If you have followed me in this line of remark you are ready to make two or three acknowledgments. The first

is that Christ was supernatural. "No man could go through all that," you say, "without having a nature adjoined that was supernatural." That arm—amid its muscles and nerves and bones were intertwisted the energies of omnipotence. In the syllables of that voice there was the emphasis of the eternal God. That foot that walked the deck of the lightship on Gennesaret shall stamp kingdoms of darkness into demolition. This poverty-struck Christ owned all the skies that looked down into its water, owned all the earth and all the heavens. To him of the plain coat belonged the robes of celestial royalty. He who walked the road to Emmaus—why, the lightnings were the fire-shod steeds of his chariot. Yet there are those who look on, and they see Christ turn water into wine, and they say: "Sleight-of-hand." And they see Christ raise the dead to life, and they say: "Easily explained; not really dead." And they see Christ giving sight to the blind man, and they say: "Clairvoyant doctor." Oh! what will they do on the day when Christ rises up in judgment and the hills shall rock and the trumpets shall call, peal on peal?

My subject reassures us of the fact that in all our struggles we have a sympathizer. You cannot tell Christ anything new about hardship. I do not think that the wide ages of eternity will take the scars from his punctured side and his lacerated temples and his sore hands. You will never have a burden weighing so many pounds as that burden which Christ carried up the bloody hill. You will never have any suffering worse than that which he endured when, with tongue hot and cracked and inflamed and swollen he moaned: "I thirst." You will never be surrounded by worse hostility than that which stood around Christ's feet, foaming, reviling, livid with rage, howling down his prayers and snuffing up the smell of blood. O ye faint-hearted! O ye troubled! O ye

persecuted one! here is a heart that can sympathize with you.

Again, and lastly, I learn from all that has been said that Christ was awfully in earnest. If it had not been a momentous mission he would have turned back disgusted and discouraged. He saw you in a captivity from which he was resolved to extricate you, though it cost him all sweat, all tears, all blood. He came a great way to save you. He came from Bethlehem here, through the place of skulls, through the charnel house, through banishment. There was not amid all the ranks of celestials one being who would have done as much for you. I lay his crushed heart at your feet. Let it not be told in heaven that you deliberately put your foot on it. While it will take all the ages of eternity to celebrate Christ's triumph, I am here to make the startling announcement that because of the rejection of this mission on the part of some of you, all that magnificent work of garden and cross and grave is, so far as you are concerned, a failure.

XXI

On Trial

Standing in a court-room, you say to yourself: "At this bar crime has often been arraigned; at this witness-stand the oath has often been taken; at this jurors' bench the verdict has been rendered; at this judge's desk sentence has been pronounced." But I have to tell you of a trial higher than any in Circuit, Supreme Court, or Chancery. It is the trial of every Christian man for the life of his soul. This trial is different from any other in the fact that it is both civil and criminal. The issues at stake are tremendous, and I shall show you, first, what are the grounds of complaint; then who are the witnesses in the cause, and lastly who are the advocates.

When a trial is called on, the first thing is to have the indictment read. Stand up, then, Christian man, and hear the indictment of the court of high heaven against thy soul! It is an indictment of ten counts, for thou hast directly or indirectly broken all the ten commandments. You know how it thundered on Sinai, and when God came down how the mountain rocked, and the smoke ascended as from a smoldering furnace, and the darkness gathered thickly, and the loud, deep trumpet uttered the words: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" Are you guilty or not guilty? Do not put in a negative plea too quickly, for I have to announce that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none that doeth good; no, not one. Whosoever shall keep the whole law, yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Do you

not therefore be too hasty in pronouncing yourself not guilty.

This lawsuit before us charges you with the breaking of a solemn contract. Many a time did we promise to be the Lord's. Did you keep the promise? Have you stood up to the contract? I go back to your first communion. You remember it as well as if it were yesterday. You know how the vision of the cross rose before you. You remember how from the head, the hands, the side, and the feet there came bleeding forth these two words: "Remember me!" You recall how the cup of communion trembled in your hand when you first took it; and as in a sea-shell you may hear, or think you hear, the roaring of the surf even after the shell has been taken from the beach; so you lifted the cup of communion and you heard in it the surging of the great ocean of the Savior's agony; you came forth from that communion service with face shining as though you had been on the Mount of Transfiguration; the very air seemed tremulous with the love of Jesus, and the leaves and the grass and the birds were brighter and sweeter-voiced than ever before, and you said, down in the very depths of your soul: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Have you kept the bargain, O Christian man? Have you not some time faltered when you ought to have been true? Have you not played the coward when you ought to have been the hero? I charge it upon you and I charge it upon myself—we have broken the contract.

Still further, this lawsuit claims damages at your hands. The greatest slander on the Christian religion is an inconsistent professor. The Bible says religion is one thing. We by our inconsistency say religion is some other thing, and what is more deplorable about it is that people can see faults in others while they cannot see any in themselves. Now you have heard the indictment read.

Are you ready to plead guilty or not guilty? Perhaps you are not ready yet to plead. Then the trial will go on. The witnesses will be called and we shall have the matter decided. In the name of God I now make proclamation: "Whosoever hath anything to offer in this trial in which God is plaintiff and the Christian soul the defendant let him now step forth and give testimony in this solemn trial."

The first witness that I call upon the stand in behalf of the prosecution is the World—all critical and observant of Christian character. World of the greedy eye and the hard heart, come on the stand now and testify in behalf of the prosecution against this Christian soul on trial. What do you know about this Christian man. "Oh," says the World, "I know a great deal about him. He talks about putting his treasures in heaven, but he is the sharpest man in a trade I ever knew. He seems to want us to believe that he is a child of God, but he is just full of imperfections. I am a great deal better than he is now. Oftentimes he is very earthly, and talks so little about Christ and so much about himself I am very glad to testify that this is a bad man."

The second witness I call in this case is Conscience. Who art thou, Conscience? What is your business? Where were you born? What are you doing here? "Oh," says Conscience, "I was born in heaven! I came down to befriend this man. I have lived with him. I have instructed him. I have warned him. I showed him the right and the wrong, advising him to take the one and eschew the other. I have kindled a great light in his soul. With a whip of scorpions I have scourged his wickedness; and I have tried to cheer him when doing right; and yet I am compelled to testify on the stand to-day that he has sometimes rejected my mission. Oh, how many cups of life have I pressed to his lips that he dashed down,

and how often has he stood with his hard heel on the bleeding heart of the Son of God! It pains me very much that I have to testify against this Christian man, and yet I must, in behalf of him who will in no wise clear the guilty, say that this Christian man has done wrong. He has been worldly. He has been neglectful. He has done a thousand things he ought not to have done." That will do, Conscience.

The third witness is the angel of God. Bright and shining one, what doest thou here? What hast thou to say against this man on trial? "Oh," says the angel, "I have been a messenger to him. I have guarded him. I have watched him. With this wing I have defended him, and oftentimes when he knew it not I led him into the green pastures and beside the still waters. He has not done as he ought to have done; though I came from the sky he drove me back. Though with this wing I defended him, and though with this voice I wooed him, I have to announce his justified imperfections. I dare not keep back the testimony, for then I should not dare to appear again among the sinless ones before the great white throne." The evidence on the part of the prosecution has closed. We have now come to the most interesting part of this great trial. The evidence all in, the advocate speaks:

I have to tell you that in this trial of the Christian for the life of the soul the advocates are mighty, wise and eloquent. The evidence all being in, Justice rises on behalf of the prosecution to make the plea. With the Bible open in his hands he reads the law, stern and inflexible, and the penalty: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Then he says: "Thou, Judge and Lawgiver, this is thine statute and all the evidence in earth and heaven agrees in stating that this man has sinned against all these enactments. Now, let the sword leap from its scabbard. Shall

a man go through the very flames of Sinai unsinged? Let the law be executed. Let judgment be pronounced. Let him die. I demand that he die."

Christian, does it not look very dark for thee? Who will plead on thy side in so forlorn a cause? Sometimes a man will be brought into a court of law and he will have no friends and no money, and the judge will look over the bar and say, "Is there any one who will volunteer to take this man's case and defend him? and some young man rises and says, "I will be his counsel," perhaps starting on from that very point to a great and brilliant career. Now in this matter of the soul, as you have nothing to pay for counsel, do you think that any one will volunteer? Yes, yes; I see One rising. He is a young man, only thirty-three years of age. I see his countenance suffused with tears and covered with blood, and all the galleries of heaven are thrilled with the spectacle. Thanks be unto God, "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Christian soul, your case begins to look better. I think perhaps after all you may not have to be condemned. The best advocate in all the universe has taken your side. No one was ever so qualified to defend a man as this Advocate is qualified to defend you. He knows all the law, all its demands, all its penalties. He is always ready. No new turn of the case can surprise him, and he will plead for you for nothing, as earnestly as though you brought a world of treasures to his feet. Besides that, he has undertaken the cause of thousands who were as forlorn as you, and he has never lost a case. Courage, O Christian soul! I think that, after all, there may be some chance for you, for the great Advocate rises to make his plea. He says: "I admit all that has been proven against my client. I admit all these sins, aye more; but look at that wounded hand of mine; look at that other wounded hand, at my

right foot and at my left foot. By all these wounds I plead for his clearance. Count all the drops of my tears. Count all the drops of my blood. By the humiliation of Bethlehem, by the sweat of Gethsemane, by the suffering of the cross, I demand that he go free. On this arm he hath leaned; to this heart he hath flown; in my tears he hath washed; on my righteousness he hath depended. Let him go free. I am the ransom. Let him escape the lash. I took the scourgings. Let the cup pass from him, I drank it to the dregs. Put on him the crown of life, for I have borne the crown of thorns. Over against my cross of shame set his throne of triumph."

Well, the counsel on both sides have spoken and there is only one more thing remaining, and that is the awarding of the judgment. If you have ever been in a courtroom you know the silence and the solemnity when the verdict is about to be rendered or the judgment about to be given. About this soul on trial, shall it be saved or shall it be lost? Attention! above, around, beneath. All the universe cries: "Hear! Hear!" The judge rises and gives his decision, never to be changed, never to be revoked. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

But, my friends, there is coming a day of trial in which not only the saint but the sinner must appear. That day of trial will come very suddenly. The farmer will be at the plow, the merchant will be in the counting-room, the woodman will be ringing his ax on the hickories, the weaver will have his foot on the treadle, the manufacturer will be walking amid the buzz of looms and the clack of flying machinery, the counsel may be standing at the bar pleading the law, the minister may be in the pulpit pleading the Gospel, the drunkard may be reeling amid his cups, and the blasphemer with the oath caught between his teeth. Lo! the

tide rises. Lo! the sun hides. Night comes down at mid-noon. A wave of darkness rolls over the earth. The stars appear at noonday. The earth shudders and throbs. There an earthquake opens and a city sinks as a crocodile would crunch a child. Mountains roll in their sockets and send down their granite cliffs in an avalanche of rock. Rivers pause in their chase for sea and ocean, uprearing, cries to flying Alps and Himalaya. Beasts bellow and moan and snuff up the darkness. Clouds fly like flocks of swift eagles. Great thunders beat and boom and burst. Stars shoot and fall. The almighty rises on his throne, declares that time shall be no longer, and the archangel's trump repeats it till all the living hear and the continents of dead spring to their feet, crying: "Time shall be no longer!" Oh, on that day, will you be ready? I have shown you how well the Christian will get off in his trial. Will you get off as well in your trial? Will Christ plead on your side or will he plead against you? Oh, what will you do in the last great assize if your conscience is against you, and the world is against you, and the angels of heaven are against you, and the Holy Spirit is against you, and the Lord God Almighty is against you? Better this day secure an Advocate.

XXII

Good Game Wasted

David and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Micah and Solomon showed that some time they had been out on a hunting expedition. The hunter in olden times had two missions, one to clear the land of ferocious beasts and the other to obtain meat for themselves and their families. The occupation and habit of hunters are a favorable Bible simile. David said he was hunted by his enemy like a partridge upon the mountain. Solomon by one master-stroke gives a picture of laziness when he says: "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting." The most of hunters have the game they shot or entrapped cooked the same evening or the next day; but not so with this laggard. 'Too lazy to rip off the hide. Too lazy to kindle the fire and put the gridiron on the coals. The world has many a specimen since Solomon's time of those whose lassitude and improvidence and uselessness were depicted.

Indolence is often a result of easy circumstances. Rough experience in earlier life seems to be necessary in order to make a man active and enterprising. Those who have become the deliverers of nations once had nowhere to lay their heads. Locusts and wild honey have been the fare of many a John the Baptist, while those who have been fondled of fortune and petted and praised have often grown up lethargic. They have none of the heroism which comes from fighting one's own battles. The warm summer sun of prosperity has weakened and relaxed them.

The most of those who have made a dead failure of life

can look back and see a time when a great opportunity opened, but they did not know it. God gives most men at least one good opportunity. A great Grecian general was met by a group of beggars, and he said to them: "If you want beasts to plow your fields I will lend you some. If you want land I will give you some. If you want seed to sow your land I will see that you get it. But I will encourage none to idleness." God gives most people an opportunity of extrication from depressed circumstances. As if to create in us a hatred for indolence, God has made those animals which are sluggish to appear loathsome in our eyes, while those which are fleet and active he has clothed in attractiveness. The sloth, the snail, the crocodile repel us, while the deer and the gazelle are as pleasing as they are fleet, and from the swift wings of innumerable birds God has spared no purple or gold or jet or crimson or snow whiteness. Beside this the Bible is constantly denouncing the vice of laziness. Solomon seems to order the idler out of his sight, as being beyond all human instruction, when he says: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise." And Paul seems to drive him from his dining-table before he gets through with the first course of food with the edict: "If any will not work, neither shall he eat."

Another cause of indolence is severe discouragement. There are those around us who started life with the most sanguine expectation. Their enterprise excited the remark of all compeers. But sudden and overwhelming misfortune met them, and henceforth they have been inactive. Trouble instead of making them more determined has overthrown them. They have lost all self-reliance. There are few sadder sights than a man of talent, and tact, and undoubted capacity giving up life as a failure, like a line of magnificent steamers rotting against wharves from which they ought to have been

carrying the exportations of a nation. Every financial panic produces a large crop of such men. Again, bad habits are a fruitful source of indolence. Sinful indulgences shut a man's shop and dull his tools and steal his profits. Dissoluteness is generally the end of industry. The healthiness of the whole natural world depends upon activity. The winds tossed and driven in endless circuits, scattering the mists from the mountains and scooping out death damps from the caves, and blasting the miasma of swamps and hurling back the fetid atmosphere of great cities are healthy, just because of their swiftness and uncontrollableness of sweep. But after a while the wind falls and the hot sun pours through it, and when the leaves are still and the grain fields bend not once all day long, then pestilence smites its victims and digs trenches for the dead. The fountain born far up in the wildwood of the mountain comes down brighter for every obstacle against which it is riven and singing a new song on every shelf of rock over which it bounds till it rolls over the water-wheels in the valley, not ashamed to grind corn. It runs through the long grass in the meadow where the willows reach down to dip their branches and the unyoked oxen come at eventide to cool. Healthy water! Bright water! While some stream too lazy any more to run gathers itself into a wayside pool where the swine wallow, and filthy insects hop over the surface, and reptiles crawl among the ooze, and frogs utter their hideous croak, and by day and night arises from the foul mire and green scum, fever, and plague, and death. There is an endless activity under foot and overhead. Not one four-o'clock in the flower bed, not one fly on the window-pane, not one squirrel gathering food from the cones of the white pine, not one rabbit feeding in clover tops, not one drop falling in a shower, not one minnow glancing in the sea, not one quail whistling from the grass, not

one hawk cawing in the sky, but is busy now and is busy always, fulfilling its mission as certainly as any monarch on earth or any angel in heaven. You hear the shout of the plow-boys busy in the field and the rattle of the whiffletrees on the harrow, but you do not know that there is more industry in the earth upturned, and in the dumb vegetation under foot, than in all that you see. If you put your ear to a lump of riven sod you may hear nothing in the roots and spiculæ of grass, but there are at work spades and cleavers and pile drivers and battering rams and internecine wars.

I do not wonder that the lively fancy of the ancient saw in inanimate creation around them Floras and Pomonas and Graces and Fauns and Fairies and Satyrs and Nymphs. Everything is busy. Nothing is inanimate except the man who cannot see the life and hear the music. At the creation the morning stars sang together, but they were only the choir which was to lead all the stars and all the mountains and all the seas in God's worship. All natural objects seem at one and the same time uniting in work and joy and worship. In God's creation there is no pause in either the worship or the work or the joy. Amid all natural objects at one and the same time it is Halloween and Whit Sunday and Ash Wednesday and All Saints' Day. All the healthy beauty of that which we see and hear in the natural world is dependent upon activity and unrest. Men will be healthy—intellectually, morally and physically—only upon the condition of an active industry. I know men die every day of overwork. They drop down in coal pits and among the spindles of Northern factories and on the cotton plantations of the South. In every city and town and village you find men groaning under burdens as, in the East the camels stagger under their loads between Aleppo and Damascus. Life is crushed out every day at counters and work benches

and anvils. But there are multitudes who die from inertia. Indulgences every day are contracting diseases beyond the catholicon of allopathy and homeopathy and hydropathy and eclecticism. If there were not so many lies written on tombstones and in obituaries you would see what multitudes of the world's inhabitants are slain in their attempts to escape the necessity of toil. Men cross oceans and continents and climb the Alps and sit under the sky of Italy or the shadow of Egyptian pyramid, and go down into ancient ruins and bathe at Baden-Baden and come home with the same shortness of breath and the same twitching of the nerves; when at home with their own spade they might have dug health out of the ground, or with their own ax hewn health out of a log, or with their own scythe garnered health from the grain field. Health flies from the bed of down and says: "I cannot sleep here"; and from the table spread with epicurean viands, saying: "I cannot eat here"; and from the vehicle of soft cushions and easy springs, saying: "I cannot ride here"; and from houses luxuriously warmed and upholstered, saying: "I cannot live here"; and some day you meet Health, who declined all these luxuriant places, walking in the plow's furrow or sweltering beside the hissing forge, or spinning among the looms, or driving a dray or tinning a roof or carrying hods of brick up the ladder of a wall.

Furthermore, notice that indolence endangers the soul. Satan makes his chief conquests over men who either have nothing to do, or if they have, refuse to do it. Idleness not only leads a man into associations which harm his morals, but often thrusts upon him the worst kind of skepticism. It is not among occupied merchants, industrious mechanics, and professional men always busy that you hear the religion of Jesus maligned, but in public lounging places given up to profanity and dissoluteness. They

have no sympathy with the Book that says: "Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give him that needeth." I never knew a man given up to thorough idleness that was converted. Simon and Andrew were converted while fishing, and Lydia while selling purple, and the shepherds of Bethlehem watching their flocks heard the voice of angels, and Gideon was threshing on the threshing-floor, but no one was ever converted with his hands in his pockets. Let me tell the idler that there is no hope for him either in this world or in the world which is to come. If the Son of God who owned the whole universe worked in the carpenter's shop of Joseph, surely we who own so little yet want so much ought to be busy.

Alas that in this world there should be so many loungers and so few workers! We go into the vineyard of the Church and we hear the arbor groan under the weight of the vines and the clusters hanging down large and thick and ripe, cluster against cluster, fairer than the bunches of Eshcol and Engedi, and at a touch they will turn into wine more ruddy than that of Libanus and Helbon. But where are the men to gather the vintage and tread the wine-press. There comes to your ear a sound of a thousand wheat fields ready for the sickle. The grain is ready. It would fill the barns. It would fill the garner. After a while it will lodge, or the mildew and the rust will smite it. Where are the reapers to bind the sheaves? The enemies of God are marshaled. You see the glittering of their bucklers. You hear the pawing of their chargers, and all along the battle line is heard the shout of their great Captain, and at the armies of the living God they hurl their defiance. Where are the chosen few who will throw themselves into the jaws of this conflict? King James gave to Sir John Scott, for his courage, a coat-of-

arms with a number of spears for the crest, and the motto, "Ready, aye, ready!" and yet when God calls us to the work and the cause demands our espousal, and interests dreadful as the Judgment and solemn as eternity tremble in the balance, how few of us are willing to throw ourselves into the breech, crying, "Ready! aye, ready!" Oh, I should like to see God arise for the defense of his own cause and the disenthralment of a world in bondage. How the fetters would snap and how the darkness would fly and how heaven would sing!

There are those who hunt for opportunities, and when they get them do not use them. The rabbit they overcome by an early morning tramp lies for weeks uncooked in the dooryard. The deer they brought down after long and exhausting pursuit in the Adirondacks lies on their doorsill undressed, and the savory venison becomes a malodorous carcass. They roast not that which they took in hunting. Opportunities laboriously captured yet useless, and that which came in invitingly, like a string of plover and quail, and wild duck hung over a hunter's shoulder, turns to something worse than nothing. So with Agrippa when almost persuaded to be a Christian. So with the lovely young man who went away from Christ very sorrowful. So with tens of thousands who have whole handfuls, whole skyfuls of winged opportunities which profit them nothing at all, because they roast not that which they took in hunting. Oh, make out of the captured moment a banquet for eternity.

XXIII

The Sensitiveness of Christ

A great crowd of excited people elbowing each other this way and that, and Christ in the midst of the commotion. They were on the way to see him restore to complete health a dying person. Some thought he could effect the cure, others that he could not. At any rate, it would be an interesting experiment. A very sick woman of twelve years' invalidism is in the crowd. Some say her name was Martha, others say her name was Veronica. I do not know what her name was but this is certain: she had tried all methods of cure.

The crowd parts, and this invalid comes almost up to Christ; but she is behind him and his human eye does not take her in. She has heard so much about his kindness to the sick and she thinks if she can only touch him once it will do her good. She pushes still further through the crowd and kneels and puts her finger on the edge of the blue fringe of the coat. She just touches it. Quick as an electric shock there thrilled back into her shattered nerves and shrunken veins and exhausted arteries and panting lungs and withered muscles health, beautiful health, rubicund health, God-given and complete health. The twelve years' march of pain and pang and suffering over suspension-bridge of nerve and through tunnel of bone instantly halted.

Christ recognizes somehow that magnetic and healthful influence which through the medium of the blue fringe of his garment had shot out. He turns and looks upon that excited crowd and startles them with the interroga-

tory: "Who touched me?" The insolent crowd in substance replied: "How do we know? You ask us a question you know we cannot answer." But the roseate and rejuvenated woman came up and knelt in front of Christ and told of the touch and told of the restoration, and Jesus said: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. Go in peace." So Mark gives us a dramatization of the Gospel. Oh, what a doctor Christ is! In every one of our households may he be the family physician.

Notice that there is no addition of help to others without subtraction of power from ourselves. The context says that as soon as this woman was healed Jesus felt that virtue or strength had gone out of him. Did you never get tired for others? Have you never risked your health for others? Have you never preached a sermon, or delivered an exhortation, or offered a burning prayer, and then felt afterward that strength had gone out of you? Then you have never imitated Christ.

Are you curious to know how that garment of Christ should have wrought such a cure for this suppliant invalid? I suppose that Christ was surcharged with vitality. You know that diseases may be conveyed from city to city by garments as in the case of epidemics, and so, I suppose that garments may be surcharged with health. I suppose that Christ had such physical magnetism that it permeated all his robe down to the last thread on the border of the blue fringe. But in addition to that there was a divine thrill, there was a miraculous potency, there was an omnipotent therapeutics, without which this twelve years' invalid would not have been instantly restored. Now if omnipotence cannot help others without depletion, how can we ever expect to bless the world without self-sacrifice? A man who gives to some Christian object until he feels it, a man who in his occupation or profession overworks that he may educate his children,

a man who on Sunday night goes home, all his nervous energy wrung out by active service in Church, or Sabbath-school, or city evangelization, has imitated Christ, and the strength has gone out of him. A mother who robs herself of sleep in behalf of a sick cradle, a wife who bears up cheerfully under domestic misfortune that she may encourage her husband in the combat against disaster, a woman who by hard saving, and earnest prayer, and good counsel, wisely given, and many years devoted to rearing her family for God and usefulness and heaven, and who has nothing to show for it but premature gray hairs, and a profusion of deep wrinkles, is like Christ, and strength has gone out of her. That strength or virtue may have gone out through a garment she made for the home, that strength may have gone out through the sock you knit for the barefoot destitute, that strength may go out through the mantle hung up in some closet after you are dead.

Notice also a Christ sensitive to human touch. We talk about God on a vast scale so much we hardly appreciate his accessibility. God in magnitude rather than God in minutiae, God in the infinite rather than God in the infinitesimal; but here we have a God arrested by a suffering touch. When in the sham trial of Christ they struck him on the cheek we can realize how that cheek tingled with pain. When under the scourging the rod struck the shoulders and back of Christ, we can realize how he must have writhed under the lacerations. But here there is a sick and nerveless finger that just touches the long threads of the blue fringe of his coat, and he looks around and says, "Who touched me?" We talk about sensitive people, but Christ was the impersonation of all sensitiveness. The slightest stroke of the smallest finger of human disability makes all the nerves of his head and heart and hands and feet vibrate. It is not a

stolid Christ, not a phlegmatic Christ, not a pre-occupied Christ, not a hard Christ, not an iron-cased Christ, but an exquisitely sensitive Christ. All the things that touch us touch him, if by the hand of faith we make the connecting line between him and ourselves complete. This invalid might have walked through that crowd all day and cried about her suffering and no relief would have come if she had not touched him. When in your prayer you lay your hand on Christ you touch all the sympathies of an ardent and glowing and responsive nature. You know that in telegraphy there are two currents of electricity. So when you put out your hand of prayer to Christ there are two currents—a current of sorrow rolling up from your heart to Christ, and a current of commiseration rolling from the heart of Christ to you. Two currents. Oh, why do you go unhelped? Why do you go wondering about this and wondering about that? Why do you not touch him? Are you sick? I do not think you are any worse off than this invalid. Have you a long struggle? I do not think it has been more than twelve years. "Oh," you say, "there are so many things between me and God." There was a whole mob between this invalid and Christ. She pressed through; I guess you can press through.

Is your trouble a home trouble? Christ shows himself especially sympathetic with questions of domesticity, as when at the wedding in Cana he alleviated a housekeeper's predicament, as when tears rushed forth at the broken home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Men are sometimes ashamed to weep. There are men who if the tears start will conceal them. They think it unmanly to cry. Christ was not ashamed to cry over human misfortune. Look at that deep lake of tears opened by the two words of the evangelist: "Jesus wept!" Behold Christ on the only day of his earthly triumph marching on Jerusalem,

the glittering domes obliterated by the blinding rain of tears in his eyes and on his cheek; for when he beheld the city he wept over it. O man of many trials! O woman of the heartbreak! why do you not touch him?

"Oh," says some one, "Christ does not care for me. Christ is looking the other way. Christ has the vast affairs of his kingdom to look after. He has the armies of sin to overthrow, and there are so many worse cases of trouble than mine he does not care about me, and his face is turned the other way." So his back was turned to this invalid. He was on his way to effect a cure that was famous and popular and wide-resounding. But the context says, "He turned him about." He who all the allied armies of hell cannot stop a minute or divert an inch, by the wan, sick, nerveless finger of human suffering turned clear about.

Oh, what a comfort there is in this subject for people who are called nervous. Of course it is a misapplied word in that case, but I use it in the ordinary parlance. After twelve years of suffering, what nervous depression this woman must have had. The Bible says she "had suffered many things of many physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." She knew all about insomnia, and about the awful apprehension of something going to happen, and irritability about little things that in health would not have perturbed her. When I see this nervous woman coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, I say she is making the way for all nervous people. Nervous people do not get much sympathy. If a man breaks his arm everybody is sorry. If a woman has an eye put out by accident, they say: "That's a dreadful thing." Everybody is asking about her convalescence. But when a person is suffering under the ailment of which I am now speaking, they say: "Oh, that's nothing; she's just a little nervous, that's all," putting a slight upon the most

agonizing kind of suffering. Now I have a new prescription to give you. I want you to bring your irritability and all your weaknesses, and with them touch Jesus. Paul was right when he said, "We have not a high priest who cannot be touched."

The fact is Christ himself was nervous. All those nights out of doors in malarial districts where an Englishman or an American dies if he goes at certain seasons—and so hungry; and his feet wet with the wash of the sea; and the wilderness tramp, and the persecution, and the outrage must have broken down his nervous system; a fact proved by the statement that he lived so short a time on the cross. That is a lingering death ordinarily, and many a sufferer on the cross has writhed in pain twenty-four hours, forty-eight hours. Christ lived only six. Why? He was exhausted before he mounted the bloody tree. Oh! it is a worn-out Christ, sympathetic with all people worn out.

The world wants sympathy; it is dying for sympathy, large-hearted sympathy. There is omnipotence in the touch. When we touch Christ, Christ touches us. O my brother, I am so glad when we touch him with our sorrow, he touches us. When out of your grief and vexation you put your hand on Christ, it wakens all human reminiscence. Are you tempted? He was tempted. Are you sick? He was sick. Are you persecuted? He was persecuted. Are you bereft? He was bereft. That is the way Christ knows so much about our sorrows. He slept on the cold doorstep of an inhospitable world that would not let him in. He is sympathetic now with all the suffering and all the tried and all the perplexed. Why do you not go and touch him?

You utter your voice in a mountain pass and there come back ten echoes, twenty echoes, thirty echoes, perhaps—weird echoes. Every voice of prayer, every

ascription of praise, every groan of distress has divine response and celestial reverberation and all the galleries of heaven are filled with sympathetic echoes, and throngs of ministering angels echo and the temples of the redeemed echo and the hearts of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost echo and reëcho.

I preach a Christ so near you can touch him—touch him with your guilt and get pardon—touch him with your bondage and get manumission. You have seen a man take hold of an electric chain. A man can with one hand take one end of the chain and with the other hand he may take hold of the other end of the chain. Then a hundred persons taking hold of that chain will all together feel the electric power. You have seen that experiment. Well, Christ with one wounded hand takes hold of one end of the electric chain of love, and all earthly and angelic beings may lay hold that chain and around and around in sublime and everlasting circuit runs the thrill of terrestrial and celestial and brotherly and saintly and cherubic and seraphic and archangelic and divine sympathy. So that if Christ should sweep his hand over us and say, "Who touched me?" there would be hundreds and thousands of voices responding: "I!" "I!" "I!"

XXIV

Arousing Considerations

Starting out on a considerable journey, you turn not to the right, nor the left, nor stop, but hasten on, mile after mile, until you come to the top of the hill. Then you rein in your horse; the horse smokes with the length of the way. You throw the reins on his neck. You take your feet out of the stirrups; you look back over the road you have traveled—the hill, the valleys, the streams, the bridges; you take out your watch and see how long you have been taking the journey and then make calculation of how long it will be before you reach your destination. So it is with us now. No horseman ever spurred on a steed more rapidly than you and I are going up the steep of life, and down its declivities, on and on. But coming to-night upon this mountain-top of privilege, we stop a moment and look backward upon the way we have traveled, considering what losses we have suffered, what emoluments we have gained, what temptations we have conquered, what sins we have committed, what grace we have received; and then, looking forward, we make estimate of what will probably be the end of our journey before we reach our Father's house on high. I put my finger on the pulse of this moment, and I feel that it beats high with tremendous issues. We have started in an existence which will continue after the sun has grown cold in death and the wrecked and foundered world shall have strewn its timbers on the coast of eternal desolation. How solemn is the question, Where will you and I be after time has passed and the judgment has gone by, and

as many years have rolled away as there are stars in the sky, as there are leaves in the forest? Where? where?

A Roman citizen, having saved the life of another Roman citizen, had honors bestowed upon him. He was allowed to sit in the Senate simply because he had saved the life of a man. He was allowed to walk in great processions. When he entered a room it was customary for all the people to rise in his presence because he had saved a man, saved a physical life, and nothing but a physical life. Would God that you and I might have aspiration after higher honors of saving an immortal soul. God help us, and may the same power which shook the Philippian dungeon shake the foundations of our souls while we come to consider the great thoughts of God and eternity and the dead and the Judgment.

In order that we may awake to righteousness I propose, so far as God may help me, to offer you three or four arousing considerations; and the first arousing consideration is the obstacles in the way of our salvation. Now you all know that is not a wise general who begins by telling his troops they have but little to do, and by depreciating the enemy, and by saying their fortresses are easily overcome, and they are all cowards on the other side. That would be a foolish general. A wise general tells his troops: "There is hard work to be done, there are mighty enemies to be overthrown, there are almost impregnable fortresses to be taken, and I depend upon your heroism. You must do this work. Look at the old flag now, and march on." Well, I will not underrate the obstacles in the way of your salvation. When a man starts out for heaven it is one against a hundred, it is one against a thousand obstacles, it is one against ten thousand. The obstacles are so great, and the hosts opposing are so numerous, there is no chance at all unless God Almighty help a man. He is sure to be worsted in the con-

flict unless God shall come to the rescue. It would be a foolish thing for me to come here and tell you that the march to heaven is an easy march. Every Christian man would be ready to rise up and testify that I was misrepresenting the matter. Paul said something appropriate when he represented the Christian life as a struggle, war with the world, war with the flesh, war with the devil; and if a man would get away from his sins and start for heaven, he wants divine help, he wants divine rescue. You men know very well what are the ties of worldliness bearing one away from God. It is business all the time. Hurry, hurry! You go to the store, you open your letters, you set the machinery in motion, you have some conversation with the customers, you look over the money market. There are a score of practical questions for you to discuss. You go from duty to duty, from annoyance to annoyance, from gain to gain, from loss to loss, and excepting the few moments you spend at the restaurant for the noon-day's repast it is business all the time—business for this life, and you do not have time to stop and think: "I am immortal, and these feet shuffling on the street will soon stop in the march. This great procession going through Broad Street, through Wall Street, through all the streets marching up and down will halt at the encampment, the grave—I am immortal." And that goes on day after day, week after week, year after year; and you know as well as I, you know better than I, that there is a tide of worldliness that has a tendency to bear you away from God and heaven. You are struggling with it every day. As summer swallows come and whirl two or three times about a room and are gone, so these thoughts of a future life make a few circuits in your soul and vanish.

Then, in addition to all this business which harasses us and keeps us away from God, there are satanic influences abroad, evil spirits filling the air. They come down to

us, they try to stop us on the march to heaven, they try to take the backbone out of every good resolution, they meet us at the cross-roads and direct us the wrong way, they come down a great line of darkness, and they try to unhorse every good motive, they try to shatter our faith and send us into rout and ruin and everlasting disaster. Who has not felt this satanic assault?

Now if between us and heaven there are so many obstacles, we should get ready to overcome them. If there is a battle to be fought, let us have it now, and it will not be with one hand, but it will be with both hands, if we are to gain the victory. If we get to heaven it will not be by accident; if we get to heaven it will not be a gliding in, contrary to our own selection. If we get to heaven it will be because we are desirous, by God's grace, to go there, and it will be with the strain of the eye, the sweat of great earnestness on the forehead, and with every passion of our soul exhausting all the heights and depths of our nature and it will be going up with a blood-red, fire-tipped, heaven-compelling groan: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Since there are obstacles in the way it seems to me that if you and I are wise men we will make the assault at once and start for the kingdom of heaven. These obstacles are a thousand. After a while they will be ten thousand. If we want to strike for heaven now is the time to strike.

But I find another arousing consideration in the value of the soul involved. Theodoric was told by his subjects that they would like to debase some of the national coin. "No," said Theodoric, "I will not have my face on a debased coin." Yet, alas! the image of the Lord Jesus Christ in our souls has sometimes been associated with that which seems to be debased and counterfeit. Oh, this soul, this immortal soul! People talk about vast inheri-

tance. Men will sometimes take you out and show you hundreds of acres. Ah, my friends, you have just to fold your arms and you cover a vast estate—a soul deeper than the Ganges, deeper than the Ohio, deeper than the Mississippi, deeper than the ocean depth. The depths of this soul beat up in beauty and strength higher than the Atlantic wave against the Eddystone lighthouse. The soul is a living soul, a great power like a monster in a cage, racing up and down the cage, panting to get free, looking through the bars of the cage, and after while it will with one stroke overcome the shackles and with another stroke it will break down the cage, and with one leap it will reach the eternal hills. Oh, the soul! Death cannot kill it, the grave cannot hide it, eternity cannot exhaust it. The soul! How shall I represent its value? Shall I compare it to a mine of gold and silver? Oh, no! the gold and silver are limited; they will be worth nothing; they will be worth nothing more in the last fire than the scoria spit out from Cotopaxi. But these treasures of the soul will last as long as heaven has vases to hold them. Oh, the soul! Let us weigh it; let us lift the balance of the sanctuary; let these scales be well adjusted, the two sides just even and then on one side of that scale we put nothing but a soul, an immortal soul. On the other side we put the world with all its honors and emoluments; we put the entire universe on that side. But that side rises and the other side comes down with a jerk of a thousand-ton weight; the soul heavier than them all.

Another arousing consideration is in the brevity of time afforded us. For vast work you want vast time. How many years was St. Paul's, in London, in the building? How many years were the great cathedrals of the world in the building? Now here is an immortal nature, here is the temple of truth and righteousness to be constructed. It is a vast edifice. How long will you allow us in this

world for the building of this temple of righteousness? A thousand years? Oh, that would seem too short; but we will not have half that, nor four hundred years, nor three hundred, nor one hundred. The average of human life is less than forty years. Oh, the vastness of the work and yet the brevity of the time in which we are to accomplish it! Like the weaver's shuttle; as the eagle hasteth to his prey; a vapor which appeareth for a little time and then vanishes away.

My brother in China said that after the revolution there were a great many lives of the insurgents taken, and he described the machine that was invented and put into work by which, as quick as beating his hand, the lives of the insurgents perished stroke after stroke. Yet how much more rapidly men go into the eternal world! While I speak another, another, another, another—great waves of humanity dashing up on the ocean beach of eternity. Every beat of the heart says, Be quick! Every cough, every pain says, Be quick! "What thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

I find another arousing consideration in the fact that so many have made shipwreck who had the same chance we have. We feel thoughtful about the things of eternity; so did they. We read the Bible; so did they. We sing the songs of Zion; so did they. And yet somehow they never took the decisive step, and they missed heaven.

There is nothing that ennobles one's character like the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ does not propose to cast you down; he proposes to lift you up. Will you accept this Gospel? The Holy Spirit is brooding over our souls. The cross is lifted, the banquet is spread and everything ready; and all you have to do is to come in and sit down at it. Every one that thirsteth, take the chalice of God's mercy. O ye prodigals, come up from the swine-feeding! Have on your hand the ring of Divine

Affection. Take the robe of God's righteousness. Sit down and let there be joy in heaven, because the dead are alive again, and because the lost are found. I swing the gate wide open so that all may go in *en masse*. If you only understood the tenderness of my God! If you only knew what a soft pillow the Divine promises make for a weary head! If you only knew what beauty there is in this Gospel! There would not be a man go unblessed.

The world does not understand your trials, and when you go astray they do not offer you any sympathy. While others get solace you go on with no one to comfort you; and I am the man to comfort you, to tell you of the Lord Jesus Christ who himself was a young man and died while he was a young man that he might win the heart of every young man. The Son of God dipping his own finger in the blood of his own heart, the blood of his own foot, the blood of his own life, wrote out this invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Who is there that does not want rest? To whom is life not a struggle? Who always has it easy? Who has never wept? Where is the heart that has never been broken? "I will give you rest." Oh, take that rest now. Get both your feet on the Rock of Ages and let the waves dash. All is well. They who are in Christ shall never be put to confusion. You have often heard how the preachers in their sermons sometimes close with a grand peroration, piling comparison upon comparison, and simile upon simile until it is grand and majestic. The peroration of my sermon is five words—five words chosen out of the one hundred and fourteen thousand words of our language as words most impressive and stupendous. Five words! Who can measure the height of them? Who can plummet the depth of them? Five, all suggestive words. God—Christ—Heaven—Hell—Judgment.

The Threefold Glory of the Church

God, who has determined that everything shall be beautiful in its season, has not left the night without charm. The moon rules the night. The stars are only set as gems in her tiara. Sometimes before the sun has gone down the moon mounts her throne, but it is after nightfall that she sways her undisputed scepter over island and continent, river and sea. Under her shining the plainest maple leaves become shimmering silver, the lakes from shore look like shining mirrors, and the ocean under her glance with great tides comes up panting upon the beach, mingling as it were foam and fire.

Under the witchery of the moon the awful steeps lose their ruggedness and the chasms their terror. The poor man blesses God for throwing so cheap a light through the broken window-pane of his cabin and to the sick it seems like a light from the other shore that bounds this great deep of human pain and woe.

If the sun is like a song, full and loud and poured forth from brazen instruments that fill heaven and earth with harmony, the moon is plaintive and sad, standing beneath the throne of God, sending her soft sweet praise while the stars listen, and the sea! No mother ever more lovingly watched a sick cradle than this pale watcher of the sky bends over the weary earth; singing to it silvery music, while rocked in the cradle of the spheres.

Christ compares it to the Church of God. "This is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Like

the moon the Church is a borrowed light. She gathers up the glory of a Savior's suffering, a Savior's death, a Savior's resurrection, a Savior's ascension, and pours light in palace, dungeon, on squalid heathenism and elaborate skepticism, on widow's tears, and martyr's robe of flame, on weeping penitence and loud-mouthed scorn. She is the only institution to-day that gives any light to our world. Into her portal the poor come and get the sympathy of a once pillowless Christ; the bereaved come and see the bottle in which God saves all our tears, and the captives come and on the sharp corners of her altars rend off their chains. As the moon goes through the threatening storm clouds unflushed and unharmed and comes out calm and beautiful on the other side, so the Church of God has gone through all the storms of this world's persecution and come out uninjured, no worse for the fact that Robespierre cursed it, and Voltaire caricatured it, and Tom Paine sneered at it, and all the forces of darkness have bombarded it. Not like some baleful comet shooting across the sky scattering terror and dismay among the nations; but above the long howling night of the world's wretchedness the Christian Church has made her mild way, "fair as the moon."

I take a step further in my subject: "Clear as the sun." After a season of storm or fog, how you are thrilled when the sun comes out at noonday! The mists travel up hill above hill, mountain above mountain, until they are sky-lost. The forests are full of chirp and buzz and song; honey-makers in the log, bird's beak pounding the bark, the chatter of the squirrel on the rail, the call of a hawk out of the clear sky, make you thankful for the sunshine which makes all the world so busy and so glad. The same sun which in the morning kindled conflagrations among the castles of cloud stoops down to paint the lily white

and the buttercup yellow and the forget-me-not blue. What can resist the sun? Light for the voyager on the deep; light for the shepherd guarding his flocks afield; light for the poor who have no lamps to burn; light for the downcast and weary; light for aching eyes and burning brain and consuming captive; light for the smooth brow of childhood and the dim vision of the octogenarian; light for the queen's coronet and the sewing girl's needle. "Let there be light!"

"Who is she that looketh forth clear as the sun?" Our answer is the Church. You have been going along a road before daybreak and on one side you thought you saw a lion and on the other side you thought you saw a goblin of the darkness; but when the sun came out you found these were harmless apparitions. And it is the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ to come forth "clear as the sun" to illuminate all earthly darkness; to explain as far as possible all mystery; and to make the world radiant in its brightness; and that which you thought was an aroused lion is found out to be a slumbering lamb, and the sepulchral gates of your dead turn out to be the opening gates of heaven; and that which you thought to be a flaming sword to keep you out of paradise is an angel of light to beckon you in.

The church of God will soon come to full meridian; and in that day all the mountains of the world will be sacred mountains touched with the glory of Calvary. All the darkness of sin, all the darkness of trouble, all the darknesses of earthly mystery hieing themselves to their dens. "Clear as the sun! clear as the sun!"

If you were placed for the defense of a feeble town, and a great army were seen coming over the hill with flying ensigns, then you would be able to get some idea of the terror that will strike the hearts of the enemies of

God when the Church at last marches "like an army with banners."

There is a vast distinction between the poetry and prose of war. The roll of drums and the call of bugles, the flying of ensigns, the champing of steeds foaming and pawing for the battle; a hundred thousand muskets glittering; generals returning home under flaming arches and showering amaranths and the shout of empires; that is poetry. Chilled and half blanketed, lying on the wet ground; feet sore with the march and bleeding at the slightest touch; hunger pulling on every fiber of flesh or attempting to satisfy itself with scanty and spoiled ration; thirst licking up the dew or drinking out of filthy and trampled pool; thoughts of home and kindred far away while just on the eve of deadly strife, where death may leap on him from any one of a hundred bayonets; the closing in of two armies, now changed to a hundred thousand maniacs; the ground slippery with blood and shattered flesh; fallen ones writhing under the hoofs of unbridled chargers maddened with pain; the dreadfulness of night that comes down when the strife is over; the struggle of the wounded ones crawling out over the corpses; the long feverish agony of the crowded barrack and hospital from whose mattresses the fragments of men send up their groans, the only music of carnage and butchery; desolate homes from which fathers and husbands and sons went off without giving any dying message or sending a kiss to the dear ones at home, tumbled into a soldier's grave trench; the houses in which a few weeks before unbroken family circles rejoiced now plunged in the great sorrows of widowhood and orphanage; that is prose.

The Church of Jesus Christ is an army with banners. You know there is nothing that excites a soldier's enthusiasm so much as an old flag. Many a man almost dead, catching a glimpse of the national ensign, has sprung to

his feet and started again into battle. Our banners have as inscription and colors such as never stirred the hearts of any earthly soldiery. We have our banner of recruit, and on it is inscribed: "Who is on the Lord's side?" Our banner of defiance, and on it is inscribed: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against us." Our banner of triumph, and on it is inscribed: "Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" and we mean to plant that banner on every hill top and wave it at the gate of heaven. I will not underrate the enemy. They are a tremendous host. They come with acutest strategy. Their weapons by the inhabitants of darkness have been forged in furnaces of everlasting fire. We contend not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places; but if God be for us who can be against us. Fall into line! Close up ranks! On, through burning sands and over mountain tops, until the whole earth surrenders to God. He made it; he redeemed it; he shall have it. With Christ to lead us, and heaven to look down upon us, and angels to guard us and martyrs' spirits to bend from their thrones, and the voice of God to bid us forward into the combat, our enemies shall fly like the chaff in the whirlwind, and all the towers of heaven shall ring because the day is ours; and Christ shall exclaim: "This is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

Living Life Over Again

No intelligent and right-feeling man is satisfied with his past life. We have all made so many mistakes, stumbled into so many blunders, said so many things that ought not to have been said, and done so many things that ought not to have been done that we can suggest at least ninety-five per cent of improvement. Now would it not be grand if the good Lord would say to you: "You can go back and try it over again. I will by word turn your hair brown or black or golden and smooth all the wrinkles out of your temple and cheek, and take the bend out of your shoulders, and extirpate the stiffness from the joint and the rheumatic twinge from the foot, and you shall be twenty-one years of age and just what you were when you reached that point before." If that proposition were made I think many thousands would accept it. That feeling caused the ancient search for what was called the Fountain of Youth, the waters of which, when taken, would turn the hair of the octogenarian into the curly locks of a boy, and however old a person might be who drank at that fountain he would be young again. The Spanish explorer, Juan Ponce de Leon, fellow voyager with Columbus, I have no doubt, felt that if he could discover that Fountain of Youth he would do as much as his friend had done in discovering America. So he put out in 1512 from Porto Rico and cruised around among the Bahamas in search of that fountain. I am glad he did not find it. There is no such fountain. But if there were and its waters were bottled

up and sent abroad at a thousand dollars a bottle, the demand would be greater than the supply; and many a man who had come through a life of uselessness, and perhaps sin, to old age would be shaking up the potent liquid, and if he were directed to take only one teaspoonful after each meal would be so anxious to make sure work he would take a tablespoonful, and if directed to take a tablespoonful would take a glassful.

But some of you would have to go further than to twenty-one years of age to make a fair start, for there are many who manage to get all wrong before that period, for some of you are suffering from bad hereditary influences which started a hundred years ago. Well, if your grandfather lived his life over again, and your father lived his life over again, and you lived your life over again, what a cluttered-up place this world would be—a place filled with miserable attempts at repairs. I begin to think it is better for each generation to have only one chance, and then for them to pass off and give another generation a chance.

If we were permitted to live life over again it would be a stale and stupid experience. The zest and spur and enthusiasm of life come from the fact that we have never been along this road before, and everything is new and we are alert for what may appear at the next turn of the road. Things that in your previous journey of life stirred your healthful ambition, or gave you pleasurable surprise, or led you into happy interrogation would only call forth from you a disgusted "Oh, pshaw!" You would be blasé at thirty and a misanthrope at forty and unendurable at fifty. The most inane and stupid thing imaginable would be a second journey of life. An oak crowded into an acorn. A Rocky Mountain eagle thrust back into the egg-shell from which it was hatched. Beside that, if you took life over again you would have to take its deep sad-

ness over again. Would you want to try again the griefs and the heartbreaks and the bereavements through which you have gone? What a mercy we shall never be called to suffer them again! We may have others bad enough, but those old ones, never again.

If you were permitted in life to stop at the sixtieth milestone or the fiftieth milestone or the fortieth milestone and retrace your steps to the twentieth your experience would be something like mine one day last November in Italy. I walked through a great city with a friend and two guides, and there were in all the city only four persons and they were those of our own group. We went up and down the streets, we entered houses, the museums, the temples, the theaters. We examined the wonderful pictures on the walls and the most exquisite mosaic on the floors. In the streets were the deep-worn ruts of wagons, but not a wagon in the city. On the front steps of mansions the word "Welcome" in Latin, but no persons to greet us. The only bodies of any of the citizens that we saw were petrified, and in the museum at the gates. Of the thirty-five thousand people who once lived in those homes and worshiped in those temples and clapped in those theaters not one left! For sixteen hundred years that city of Pompeii had been buried before modern exploration scooped out of it the lava of Vesuvius. Well, he who should be permitted to return on the pathway of his earthly life and live it over again would find as lonely and sad a pilgrimage. It would be an exploration of the dead past. The old school house, the old church, the old home, the old playground either gone or occupied by others, and for you more depressing than was our Pompeian visit in November.

XXVII

Meanness of Infidelity

Jehoiakim sits in the winter house, his feet to the fire, which is blazing and crackling on the hearth. His private secretary, Jehudi, is reading to him from a scroll containing God's words to Jeremiah; Jehoiakim is displeased at the message, gets very red in the face, jumps up and snatches the scroll from the hand of his private secretary, takes out his penknife and cuts and slashes it into pieces. Jehoiakim was under the impression that if he destroyed the scroll he would destroy the prophecy. Ah, no. Jeremiah immediately takes another scroll and the prophecy is redictated. The fact is that all the penknives ever made at Sheffield and in all the cutleries of the world cannot successfully destroy the Scriptures. We have Jehoiakims in our day, representatives of the infidelity of the hour, who propose with their penknives to hack the Word of God to pieces. With that penknife they try to stab Moses, and to stab Joshua, and to stab Christ, and to stab the God of the Bible; but while they are cutting to pieces their own copies of the Bible—for I suppose they have only one copy of this dangerous book in their houses, and that carefully guarded and locked up so none of their friends may be poisoned by it—there are innumerable copies of the Bible being distributed.

No book, secular or religious, ever multiplied with such speed and into such vastness as the Word of God. Where one Bible dies ten thousand Bibles are born. Cut away, then, with your infidel penknives.

These infidels propose to cut the Bible to pieces in

ridicule. Now I like fun; no man was ever built with a keener appreciation of it. There is health in laughter, moral health, spiritual health—provided you laugh at the right thing. The morning is jocund. The Indian with its own mist baptizes the cataract Minnehaha, or laughing water. You have not kept your eyes open or your ears alert, if you have not seen the sea smile, or heard the forests clap their hands, or the orchards in blossom-week aglee with redolence. But there is laughter that is dreadful, there is a laugh which is the rebound of despair. It is not healthy to laugh about God or eternity or smirk about the things of the immortal soul.

You know what caused the accident some years ago on the Hudson River Railroad. It was an intoxicated man who for a joke pulled the string of the air brake and stopped the train at the most dangerous point of the journey. But the lightning express train, not knowing there was any impediment in the way, came down, crushing out of the mangled victims the immortal souls that went speeding instantly to God and judgment. It was only a joke. He thought it would be such fun to stop the train. He stopped it! And so these infidel champions are chiefly anxious to stop the long train of the Bible, and the long train of churches, and the long train of Christian influence, while coming down upon us are death, judgment, and eternity, coming a thousand miles a minute, coming with more force than all the lightning express trains that ever whistled, or shrieked, or thundered across the continent. Stop! say the infidels; it is only a joke. It is a subject which, though agonizing the nations, throws them into uproars of laughter; and the theme of their funniest lectures, as you see them advertised, is the most stupendous question that was ever asked: "What must I do to be saved?" It is only a joke.

These infidel advocates demonstrate the meanness of

infidelity by trying to substitute for the chief consolation of the world absolutely nothing. You have only to hear them at the edge of the grave, or at the edge of the coffin, discoursing, to find out that there is no comfort in infidelity. There is more cheer in the hooting of an owl at midnight than in their discourses at the verge of the grave. You might as well ask the spirit of eternal darkness to discourse on the brightness of everlasting day. You know there are millions of people who get their chief consolation from this Holy Book. Now they propose to take away that consolation. What do you think of it? What would you think of a crusade of this sort?

Millions of people are willing with uplifted hand toward heaven to affirm that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is full of consolation for them, and yet these champions of infidelity propose to take it away, giving nothing, absolutely nothing, except fun. Is there any greater height or depth or length or breadth, or immensity of meanness, in all God's Universe!

These men propose to substitute the religion of "don't know" for a religion of "I know." "I know in whom I have believed." "I know that my redeemer liveth." Infidelity proposes to substitute a religion of awful negatives for our religion of glorious positives, showing right before us a world of reunion and ecstasy, and high companionship and stupendous victory; the mightiest joy of earth not high enough to reach to the base of the Himalaya of splendor waiting all those who on wing of Christian faith will soar towards it.

Infidelity is trying to put out all the lighthouses on the coast of eternity, letting the soul go up the "Narrows" of death with no light, no comfort, no peace—all that coast covered with the blackness of darkness. Instead of the great lighthouse, a glowworm of wit, a firefly of jocosity. Which do you like the better, O voyager for

eternity! the firefly or the lighthouse? What a mission infidelity has started on! The extinguishing of lighthouses, the breaking up of life-boats, the dismissal of all the pilots, the turning of the inscription on your child's grave into a farce and a lie.

Walter Scott's *Old Mortality*, chisel in hand, went through the land to cut out into plainer letters the half-obliterated inscriptions on the tombstones, and it was a beautiful mission. But these infidel iconoclasts are spending their lives, with hammer and chisel, trying to cut out from the tombstones of your dead all the story of resurrection and heaven.

There stands Christianity. There stands Infidelity. Compare what they have done. Compare their resources. There is Christianity, a prayer on her lip; a benediction on her brow; both hands full of help for all who want help; the mother of thousands of colleges; the mother of thousands of asylums for the oppressed, the blind, the sick, the lame, the imbecile; the mother of missions for the bringing back of the outcast; the mother of thousands of reformatory institutions for the saving of the lost; the mother of innumerable Sabbath-schools bringing millions of children under a drill to prepare them for respectability and usefulness, to say nothing of the great future. That is Christianity.

Here is Infidelity; no prayer on her lips; no benediction on her brow, both hands clenched—what for? To fight Christianity. Infidelity standing to-day amid the suffering, groaning, dying nations, and yet doing absolutely nothing, save trying to impede those who are toiling until they fall exhausted into their graves in trying to make the world better. Gather up all the merciful work that Infidelity had ever done, add it all together, and there is not so much nobility in it as in the smallest bead of that deaconess who last night went up the dark alley of the

town and put a jar of jelly for an invalid appetite on a broken stand, and then knelt on the bare floor, praying the mercy of Christ on the dying soul. Infidelity scrapes no lint for the wounded, bakes no bread for the hungry, shakes no pillow for the sick, rouses no comfort for the bereft, gilds no grave for the dead. While Christ, our wounded Christ, our risen Christ, the Christ of the old-fashioned Bible—blessed be his name forever—our Christ stands pointing to the hospital, or the asylum, saying: “I was sick and ye gave me a couch; I was lame and ye gave me a crutch; I was blind and ye physicianed my eyesight; I was orphaned and ye mothered my soul; I was lost on the mountains and ye brought me home; inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it to me.”

Oh! what a magnificent array of men and women have been made by the religion of the Bible. I cannot now call the roll; it would take me all this day and to-night and to-morrow to call the roll. Ten thousand men and women, living and dead, standing in the present and in the past, aflame with the transpicuous glories of the Christian religion.

XXVIII

Magnetism of Christ

The prophet lived in a dark time. For some three thousand years the world had been getting worse. Kingdoms had arisen and perished. As the captain of a vessel in distress sees relief coming across the water, so the prophet, amid the stormy times in which he lived, put the telescope of prophecy to his eye, and saw, seven hundred years ahead, one Jesus advancing to the rescue. "His name shall be called Wonderful." When Isaiah called Christ the Wonderful he spoke wisely.

In most houses there is a picture of Christ. Sometimes it represents him with face effeminate; sometimes with a face despotic. I take up the Bible, the book of divine photographs, and I look at Luke's sketch, at John's sketch, and at Paul's sketch, and I say with Isaiah, "Wonderful!"

Christ was wonderful in the magnetism of his person. After the battle of Antietam, when a general rode along the lines, although the soldiers were lying down exhausted, they rose with great enthusiasm and huzzaed. As Napoleon returned from his captivity, his first step on the wharf shook all the kingdoms, and two hundred and fifty thousand men joined his standard. It took three thousand troops to watch him in exile. So there have been men of wonderful magnetism of person. But hear me while I tell you of a poor young man who came up from Nazareth to produce a thrill such as has never been excited by any other. Napoleon had around him the

memories of Austerlitz and Jena and Badajoz; but here was a man who had fought no battles; who wore no epaulets; who brandished no sword. He is no titled man of the schools, for he never went to school. He had probably never seen a prince or shaken hands with a nobleman. The only extraordinary person we know of as being in his company was his own mother, and she was so poor that in the most delicate and solemn hour that ever comes to a woman's soul she was obliged to lie down amid camel drivers grooming the beasts of burden.

I imagine Christ one day standing in the streets of Jerusalem. A man descending from high lineage is standing beside him and says: "My father was a merchant prince; he had a castle on the beach of Galilee. Who was your father?" Christ answers: "Joseph the carpenter." A man of Athens is standing there unrolling his parchment of graduation, and says to Christ: "Where did you go to school?" Christ answers: "I never graduated." The idea of such an unheralded young man attempting to command the attention of the world! As well some little fishing village on Long Island shore attempting to arraign New York. Yet no sooner does he set his foot in the town or cities of Judea than everything is in commotion. The people go out on a picnic taking only food enough for the day, yet are so fascinated with Christ that, at the risk of starving, they follow him out into the wilderness. A nobleman falls down before him and says, "My daughter is dead." A beggar tries to rub the dimness from his eyes, and says, "Lord, that my eyes may be opened." A poor, sick panting woman pressing through the crowd, says, "I must touch the hem of his garment." Children, who love their father and mother better than any one else, struggle to get into his arms and to kiss his cheek and to run their fingers through his hair, and for all time making Jesus so in love with the

little ones that there is hardly a nursery in Christendom from which he does not take one, saying: "I must have them; I will fill heaven with these; for every cedar that I plant in heaven I will have fifty white lilies. In the hour when I was a poor man in Judea they were not ashamed of me and now that I have come to a throne I do not despise them. Hold it not back, O weeping mother; lay it on my warm heart. Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

What is this coming down the road? A triumphal procession. He is seated, not in a chariot, but on an ass; and yet the people take all their coats and throw them in the way. Oh, what a time Jesus made among the children, among the beggars, among the fishermen, among the philosophers! You may boast of self-control, but if you had seen him you would have put your arms around his neck and said: "Thou art altogether lovely."

Jesus was wonderful in the opposites and seeming antagonisms of his nature. You want things logical and consistent and you say, "How could Christ be God and man at the same time?" John says Christ was the Creator: "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made." Matthew quotes him as saying that he was omnipresent: "Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Christ declares his own eternity: "I am Alpha and Omega." How can he be a lion, under his foot crushing kingdoms, and yet a lamb licking the hand that slays him? At what point do the throne and the manger touch? If Christ was God why did he flee into Egypt? Why not stand his ground? Why, instead of bearing his cross, not lift up his right hand and crush his assassins? Why stand and be spat upon? Why sleep on the mountain when he owned the palaces of eternity? Why catch fish for his breakfast on the beach in the chill morning

when all the pomegranates are his and all the vineyards are his and all the cattle his and all the partridges his? Why walk when weary and let his feet be stone-bruised when he might have taken the splendors of the sunset for his equipage and moved with horses and chariots of fire? Why beg a drink by the wayside when out of the crystal chalices of eternity he poured the Euphrates, the Mississippi and the Amazon; and dipping his hand in the fountains of heaven and shaking that hand over the world from the tips of his fingers dripping the great lakes and the oceans? Why let the Roman regiment put him to death when he might have ridden down the sky followed by all the cavalry of heaven, mounted on white horses of eternal victory?

You cannot understand. Who can? You try to confound me. I am confounded before you speak. Paul said it was unsearchable. He went climbing up from argument to argument, and from antithesis to antithesis, and from glory to glory, and sank down in exhaustion as he saw far above him other heights of divinity unscaled, and exclaimed: "That in all things he might have the preëminence."

Christ was wonderful in his teaching. The people had been used to formalities and technicalities; Christ upset all their notions as to how preaching ought to be done. There was this peculiarity about his preaching: the people knew what he meant. His illustrations were taken from the hen calling her chickens together; from salt, from candles, from fishing tackle, from a hard creditor collecting from a debtor. How few pulpits of this day would have allowed him entrance? He would have been called undignified and familiar in his style of preaching. And yet the people went to hear him. Those old Jewish rabbis might have preached on the side of Olivet fifty years and never got an audience. The philosophers

sneered at his ministrations and said: "This will never do!" The lawyers caricatured, but the common people heard him gladly. Suppose you that there were any sleepy people in his audiences? Suppose you that any woman who ever mixed bread was ignorant of what he meant when he compared the kingdom of heaven with leaven or yeast? Suppose you that the sunburned fishermen with the fish-scales upon their hands were listless when he spoke of the kingdom of heaven as a net? We spend three years in college studying ancient mythology and three years in the theological seminary learning how to make a sermon, and then we go out to save the world; and if we cannot do it according to Claude's Sermonizing or Blair's Rhetoric or Kame's Criticism we will let the world go to perdition. If we save nothing else we will save Claude and Blair. We see a wreck in sight. We must go out and save the crew and passengers. We wait until we get on our fine cap and coat and find our shining oars, and then we push out methodically and scientifically; while some plain shoreman, in rough fishing-smack and with broken oar-lock, goes out and gets the crew and passengers and brings them ashore in safety. We throw down our delicate oars and say: "What a ridiculous thing to save men in that way. You ought to have done it scientifically and beautifully." "Ah," says the shoreman, "if those sufferers had waited until you got out your fine boat they would have gone to the bottom." The work of a religious teacher is to save men; and though every law of grammar should be snapped in the undertaking and there is nothing but awkwardness and blundering in the mode, all hail to the man who saves a soul. Christ in his preaching was plain, earnest, and wonderfully sympathetic. We cannot dragoon men into heaven. We cannot drive them in with the butt end of a catechism. We waste our time in trying to catch flies with acids instead

of the sweet honeycomb of the Gospel. We try to make crab apples do the work of pomegranates.

Jesus was wonderful in his sorrows. The sun smote him and the cold chilled him, and rain pelted him, thirst parched him and hunger exhausted him. Shall I compare his sorrow to the sea? No; for that is sometimes hushed into calm. Shall I compare it with the night? No; for that sometimes gleams with Orion or kindles with Aurora. If one thorn should be thrust through your temple you would faint. But here is a whole crown made from the *Spina Christi*—small, sharp, stinging thorns. The mob makes the cross. They put down the long beam and on it they fasten a shorter beam. Got him at last. Those hands that have been doing kindness and wiping away tears—hear the hammer driving the spikes through them. Those feet, that have been going about on ministrations of mercy—battered against the cross. They then lift it up. Look! look! look! Who will help him now? Come, men of Jerusalem, ye whose dead he brought to life; ye whose sick he healed; who will help him? Who will seize the weapons of the soldiers? None to help! Having carried such a cross for us, shall we refuse to take our cross for him?

You know the process of ingrafting. You bore a hole into a tree and put in the branch of another tree. This tree of the cross was hard and rough, but into the holes where the nails went there have been grafted branches of the Tree of Life that now bear fruit for all nations. The original tree was bitter, but the branches ingrafted were sweet, and now all the nations pluck the fruit and live forever.

Christ was wonderful in his victories. First over the forces of nature. Galilee, when aroused in a storm, is overwhelming; and yet that sea crouched in his presence and licked his feet. He knew all the waves and winds.

When he beckoned they came. When he frowned they fled. The heel of his foot made no indentation on the solidified water. Medical science has wrought great changes in rheumatic limbs and diseased blood, but when the muscles are entirely withered no human power can restore them, and when a limb is once dead it is dead. But here is a paralytic—his hand lifeless. Christ says to him: "Stretch forth thy hand!" and he stretches it forth. In the Eye Infirmary how many diseases of that delicate organ have been cured! But Jesus says to one born blind: "Be open!" and the light of heaven rushes through gates that have never before been opened. Nature is his servant. The flowers—he twisted them into his sermons; the winds—they were his lullaby when he slept in the boat; the rain—it hung glittering on the thick foliage of the parables; the star of Bethlehem—it sang a Christmas carol over his birth; the rocks—they beat a dirge at his death. Behold his victory over the grave! The hinges of the family vault become very rusty because they are never opened except to take another in. There is a knob on the outside of the sepulcher, but none on the inside. Here comes the conqueror of Death. He enters that realm and says, "Daughter of Jairus, sit up"; and she sat up. To Lazarus, "Come forth"; and he came forth. To the widow's son he said, "Get up from that bier"; and he goes home with his mother. Then Jesus snatched up the keys of death and hung them to his girdle and cried until all the graveyards of the earth heard him, "O Death! I will be thy plague! O Grave! I will be thy destruction!"

But Christ's victories have only just begun. This world is his and he must have it. What is the matter with this country? Why all these financial troubles? There never will be permanent prosperity in this land until Christ rules it. This land was discovered for Christ,

and until our cities shall be evangelized and north, south, east, and west shall acknowledge Christ as King and redeemer we cannot have permanent prosperity. When governments, not only theoretically but practically, acknowledge the Savior of the world there will be peace everywhere. In that day the sea will have more ships than now, but there will not be one "man-of-war." The founderies of the world will jar mightier industries, but there will be no molding of bullets. Printing-presses will fly their cylinders with greater speed but there shall go forth no iniquitous trash. In laws, in constitutions, on exchange, in scientific laboratory, on earth and in heaven, Christ shall be called Wonderful.

XXIX

The Hornet's Mission

It seems as if the insectile world were determined to extirpate the human race. It bombards the grain fields and the orchards and the vineyards. The Colorado beetle, the Nebraska grasshopper, the New Jersey locust, the universal potato-beetle, seem to carry on the work which was begun ages ago when the insects buzzed out of Noah's ark as the door was opened.

The hornet flies out in its mission. It is a species of wasp, swift in its motion and violent in its sting. Its touch is torture to man or beast. We have all seen the cattle run bellowing under the cut of its lancet. The hornet goes in swarms. It has captains over hundreds, and twenty of them alighting on one man will produce death.

The Persians attempted to conquer a Persian city, but the elephants and the beasts on which the Persians rode were assaulted by the hornets, so that the whole army was broken up, and the besieged city was rescued. This burning and noxious insect stung out the Hittites and the Canaanites from their country. What gleaming sword and chariots of war could not accomplish was done by the puncture of an insect. "The Lord sent the hornet."

When we are assaulted by great behemoths of trouble, we become chivalric, and we assault them; we get on the high-mettled steed of our courage, and we make a cavalry charge at them, and, if God be with us, we come out stronger and better than when we went in. But alas, for the insectile annoyances of life—these foes too

small to shoot—these things without any *avoids* weight—the gnats and midges and the flies and the wasps and the hornets! In other words, it is the small stinging annoyances in our life which drive us out and use us up.

These stinging annoyances may come in the shape of a nervous organization. People who are prostrated under typhoid fevers or with broken bones get plenty of sympathy; but who pities anybody that is nervous? The sound of a heavy foot, the harsh clearing of a throat, a discord in music, a curt answer, a passing slight, the wind from the east, any one of ten thousand annoyances, opens the door for the hornet. The fact is that the vast majority of the people in this country are overworked, and their nerves are the first to give out. A great multitude are under the strain of Leyden, who, when he was told by his physician that if he did not stop working, he was in such poor health, he would die, responded, "Doctor, whether I live or die, the wheel must keep going round." These sensitive persons of whom I speak have a bleeding sensitiveness, they have a very thin covering, they are vulnerable at all points.

Again the small insect annoyances may come to us in the shape of friends and acquaintances, who are always saying disagreeable things. There are some people you cannot be with for half an hour but you feel cheered and comforted. Then there are other people you cannot be with for five minutes before you feel miserable. They do not mean to disturb you, but they sting you to the bone. They gather up all the yarn which the gossips spin and retail it. They gather up all the adverse criticisms about your person, about your business, about your home, about your church, and they make your ear the funnel into which they pour it. They laugh heartily when they tell you, as though it were a good joke, and you laugh, too—outside. These people are brought to

our attention in the Bible in the Book of Ruth. Naomi went forth beautiful and with the finest of worldly prospects into another land, but after a while she came back, widowed and sick and poor. What did her friends do when she came to the city? They all went out and instead of giving her common-sense consolation what did they do? Read the Book of Ruth and find out. They threw up their hands and said, "Is this Naomi?" as much as to say, "How awful you look!" When I entered the ministry I looked very pale for years, and every year, for four or five years, many times a year, I was asked if I had not consumption; and, passing through the room, I would sometimes hear people sigh and say, "A-ah, not long for this world!" I resolved in those times that I never in any conversation would say anything depressing and by the help of God I have kept the resolution. These people of whom I speak reap and bind in the great harvest-field of discouragement. Some day you greet them with a hilarious "Good morning," and they come buzzing at you with some depressing information.

When I see that there are so many people in the world who like to say disagreeable things and write disagreeable things, I come almost in my weaker moments to believe what a man said to me in Philadelphia one Monday morning. I went to get the horse at the livery stable, and the hostler, a plain man, said: "Mr. Talmage, I saw that you preached to the young men yesterday." I said, "Yes." He said, "No use, no use; man's a failure."

The small insect annoyances of life sometimes come in the shape of local physical trouble, which does not amount to a positive prostration, but which bothers you when you want to feel the best. Perhaps it is a sick headache which has been the plague of your life, and you appoint some occasion of mirth or sociality or usefulness, and when the clock strikes the hour you cannot make your

appearance. Perhaps the trouble is between the ear and the forehead, in the shape of a neuralgic twinge. Nobody can see it or sympathize with it; but just at the time when you want your intellect clearest, and your disposition brightest, you feel a sharp, keen, disconcerting thrust.

Perhaps these small insect annoyances will come in the shape of a domestic irritation. The parlor and the kitchen do not always harmonize. To get good service, and to keep it, is one of the great questions of the country. Sometimes it may be the arrogance and inconsiderateness of employers, but, whatever be the fact, we all admit there are these insect annoyances winging their way out from the culinary department. If the grace of God be not in the heart of the housekeeper she cannot maintain her equilibrium. The men come home at night and hear the story of these annoyances and say: "Oh, these home troubles are very little things!" They are small, small as wasps, but they sting. Martha's nerves were all unstrung when she rushed in asking Christ to scold Mary, and there are tens of thousands of women who are dying, stung to death by these pestiferous domestic annoyances.

These small insect disturbances may also come in the shape of business irritations. It is not the panics that kill the merchants. Panics come only once in ten or twenty years. It is the constant din of these every-day annoyances which is sending so many of our best merchants into nervous dyspepsia and paralysis and the grave. When our national commerce fell flat on its face, these men stood up and felt almost defiant; but their life is going away now under the swarm of these pestiferous annoyances.

I have noticed in the history of some people that their annoyances are multiplying, and that they have a hundred where they used to have ten. The naturalist tells

us that a wasp sometimes has a family of twenty thousand wasps, and it does seem as if every annoyance of your life brooded a million. By the help of God, I want to show you the other side. The hornet is of no use? Oh, yes! The naturalists tell us they are very important in the world's economy; they kill spiders, and they clear the atmosphere; and I really believe God sends the annoyances of our life upon us to kill the spiders of the soul, and to clear the atmosphere of our skies.

These annoyances are sent on us, I think, to wake us up from our lethargy. There is nothing that makes a man so lively as a nest of "yellow jackets," and I think that these annoyances are intended to persuade us of the fact that this is not a world for us to stop in. If we had a bed of everything that was attractive and soft and easy, what would we want of heaven? We think that the hollow tree sends the hornet, or we may think that the devil sends the hornet. I want to correct your opinion. "The Lord sent the hornet."

Then I think these annoyances come on us to cultivate our patience. In the gymnasium, you find upright parallel bars with holes over each other for pegs to be put in. Then the gymnast takes a peg in each hand and he begins to climb, one inch at a time, or two inches, and getting his strength cultivated, reaches after a while the ceiling. And it seems to me that these annoyances in life are a moral gymnasium, each worriment a peg with which we are to climb higher and higher in Christian attainment. We all love to see patience, but it cannot be cultivated in fair weather. Patience is a child of the storm. If you had everything desirable, and there was nothing more to get, what would you want with patience. The only time to cultivate it is when you are lied about and sick and half dead.

Now, be careful to let none of those annoyances go

through your soul unarraigned. Compel them to administer to your spiritual wealth. The scratch of a sixpenny-nail sometimes produces lockjaw, and the clip of a most infinitesimal annoyance may damage you forever. Do not let any annoyance or perplexity come across your soul without its making you better.

A returned missionary told me that a company of adventurers rowing up the Ganges were stung to death by flies that infest that region at certain seasons. The earth has been strewn with the carcasses of men slain by insect annoyances. The only way to get prepared for the great troubles of life is to conquer these small troubles. Now you do not understand; but you shall know hereafter. In heaven you will bless God even for the hornet.

XXX

Spicery of Religion

Solomon was not like some of the kings—crowned imbecility. All the splendor of his palace and retinue were eclipsed by his intellectual power. He seemed to know everything. Queen Balkis, hearing of the acuteness of Solomon, said: "I'll go and see him for myself." Yonder it comes—the cavalcade—horses and dromedaries, chariots and charioteers, jingling harness and clattering hoofs and blazing shields and flying ensigns and clapping cymbals. The atmosphere is saturated with perfume. She brings cinnamon and saffron and calamus and frankincense and all manner of sweet spices. Queen Balkis alights in an atmosphere bewitched with the aroma. As the dromedaries are driven up to the king's storehouses and the bundles of camphor are unloaded and the sacks of cinnamon and the boxes of spices are opened the purveyors of the palace discover "of spices, great abundance; neither was there any such spices as the Queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon."

Theologians agree in making Solomon a type of Christ, and in making the Queen of Sheba a type of every truth seeker; and I shall take the responsibility of saying that all the spikenard and cassia and frankincense which the Queen of Sheba brought to King Solomon is mightily suggestive of the sweet spices of our religion. Christianity is not a collection of sharp technicalities and angular facts and chronological tables and dry statistics. Our religion is compared to frankincense and to cassia and never to nightshade. It is a bundle of myrrh. It is a

collection of spices. Would God that we were as wise in taking spices to our Divine King as Queen Balkis was wise in taking the spices to the earthly Solomon. The fact is that the duties and cares of this life coming to us from time to time are stupid often and inane and intolerable. Here are men who have been planning, selling, battering, climbing, pounding, hammering for twenty years, forty years, fifty years. One great long drudgery has their life been. Their faces anxious, their feelings benumbed, their day monotonous. What is necessary to brighten up that man's life and to sweeten that acid disposition and to put sparkle into the man's spirit? The spicery of our holy religion. Why, if between the losses of life there dashed a gleam of an eternal gain; if between the betrayals of life there came the gleam of the undying friendship of Christ; if in dull times in business we found ministering spirits, flying to and fro, in our office and store and shop every-day life instead of being stupid monotone would be a glorious inspiration, penduluming between calm satisfaction and high rapture.

I must confess that a great deal of the religion of to-day is utterly insipid. There is nothing piquant or elevating about it. Men and women go around humming psalms in a minor key and culturing melancholy, and their worship has in it more sighs than raptures. We do not doubt their piety. Oh, no. But they are sitting at a feast where the cook has forgotten to season the food. Everything is flat in their experience and in their conversation. Emancipated from sin and death and hell and on their way to a magnificent heaven they act as though they were trudging on toward an everlasting Botany Bay. Religion does not seem to agree with them. It seems to catch in the windpipe and become strangulation instead of an exhilaration. All the infidel books that have been written from Voltaire down to Herbert Spencer have not

done so much damage to our Christianity as lugubrious Christians. Who wants a religion woven out of the shadows of the night? Why go growling on your way to celestial enthronement? Come out of that cave and sit down in the warm light of the sun of Righteousness. Away with the odes of melancholy and Hervey's *Meditations Among the Tombs*.

We need to put more spice and enlivenment in our religious teaching; whether it be in the prayer-meeting or in the Sabbath-school or the church. We ministers need more fresh air and sunshine in our lungs and our heart and our head. Do you wonder that the world is so far from being converted when you find so little vivacity in the pulpit and pew? We want, like the Lord, to plant in our sermons and exhortations more lilies of the field. We want fewer rhetorical elaborations and fewer sesquipedalian words; but, in the plain vernacular of the great masses, preach that Gospel which proposes to make all men happy, honest, victorious, and free. In other words we want more cinnamon and less gristle. Let this be so in all the different departments of work to which the Lord calls us. Let us be plain. Let us be earnest. Let us be common-sensical. When we talk to people in a vernacular they can understand they will be very glad to come and receive the truth we present. Would to God that Queen Balkis would drive her spice-laden dromedaries into all our sermons and prayer-meeting exhortations.

More than that we want more life and spice in our Christian work. The poor do not want so much to be groaned over as sung to. With the bread and medicines and the garments you give them let there be an accompaniment of smiles and brisk encouragement. Show them the bright side of the thing if there be any bright side. Tell them good times will come. Tell them that for the children of God there is immortal rescue. Wake

them up out of their stolidity by an inspiring laugh, and while you send in practical help, like the Queen of Sheba, also send in the spices.

We need more spice and enlivenment in our church music. Churches sit discussing whether they shall have choirs or presentors or organs or bass viols or cornets; I say take that which will bring out the most inspiring music. If we had half as much zeal and spirit in our churches as we have in the songs of our Sabbath-schools it would not be long before the whole earth would quake with the coming God. Why, nine-tenths of the people in church do not sing; or they sing so feebly that the people at their elbows do not know they are singing. People mouth and mumble the praises of God; but there is not more than one out of a hundred who makes a joyful noise unto the Rock of our Salvation. Sometimes when the congregation forgets itself and is all absorbed in the goodness of God or the glories of heaven, I get an intimation of what church music will be a hundred years from now when the coming generations shall wake up to their duty.

I promise a high spiritual blessing to any one who will sing in church and who will sing so heartily that the people all around cannot help but sing. Wake up! all the churches from Bangor to San Francisco and across Christendom. It is not a matter of preference; it is a matter of religious duty. Oh, for fifty times more volume of sound than has ever yet rolled up. St. John gives an idea of the sonorous and resonant congregational singing appropriate for churches when in listening to the temple service of heaven, he says: "I heard a great voice as the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings. Hallelujah for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Join with me in a crusade giving not only your hearts, but the mighty uplifting of your voices, and I believe we can,

through Christ's grace, sing five thousand souls into the kingdom of Christ. An argument they can laugh at; a sermon they may talk down; but a five-thousand-voiced utterance of praise to God is irresistible. Would that Queen Balkis would drive all her spice-laden dromedaries into our church music. "Neither was there any such spice as the Queen of Sheba gave King Solomon."

Now I want to impress you with the fact that religion is sweetness and perfume and spikenard and saffron and cinnamon and cassia and frankincense and all sweet spices together. "Oh," you say, "I have not looked at it as such. I thought it was a nuisance; it had for me a repulsion; I have been appalled at its advance; I have said if I have religion at all I want to have just as little of it as is possible to get me into heaven." What a mistake you have made. The religion of Christ is a present and everlasting redolence. It counteracts all trouble. Just put it on the stand beside the pillow of sickness. It catches in the curtains and perfumes the stifling air. It sweetens the cup of bitter medicine, and throws a glow on the gloom of the turned lattice. It is a balm for the aching side, and a soft bandage for the temple stung by pain. It helped Richard Baxter until in the midst of such a complication of diseases as perhaps no other man ever suffered, he wrote *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*. And it poured light upon John Bunyan's dungeon—the light of the shining gate of the shining city. And it is good for rheumatism and for neuralgia and for low spirits and for consumption; it is the catholicon for all disorders. Yes, it will heal all your sorrows. Across the couches of your sick and across the graves of your dead, I fling this shower of sweet spices. Queen Balkis, driving up to the pillared portico of the house of cedar, carried no such pungency of perfume as exhales to-day from the Lord's garden. It is peace. It is sweetness. It is comfort. It

is infinite satisfaction. This Gospel I commend to you. May God grant that through your own practical experience you may find that religion's ways are ways of pleasantness and that all her paths are peace—that it is perfume now and perfume forever. And there was an abundance of spice; “neither was there any such spice as the Queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.”

The House on the Hills

The disciples were sad, and Christ offered heaven as an alternative, a stimulant, and a tonic. He shows them that their sorrows are only a dark background of a bright picture of coming felicity. He lets them know that though now they live on the lowlands, they shall yet have a house on the uplands. Nearly all the Bible descriptions of heaven may be figurative. I am not positive that in all heaven there is a literal crown or harp or pearly gate or throne or chariot. They may be only used to illustrate the glories of the place, but how well they do it! The favorite symbol by which the Bible presents celestial happiness is a house. Paul, who never owned a house, although he hired one for two years in Italy, speaks of heaven as a "house not made with hands," and Christ says, "In my Father's house are many rooms." This divinely authorized comparison of heaven to a great homestead of large accommodations I propose to carry out. In some healthy neighborhood a man builds a very commodious habitation. He must have room for all his children. The rooms come to be called after the different members of the family. Millennia ago God built on the hills of heaven a great homestead for a family innumerable, yet to be.

The place is to be apportioned off into apartments. We shall love all who are in heaven, but there are some very good people whom we would not want to live with in the same room. They may be better than we are, but they are of a divergent temperament. We would

like to meet with them on the golden streets, and worship with them in the temple, and walk with them on the river banks, but I am glad to say that we shall live in different apartments. "In my Father's house are many rooms." Heaven will be so large that if one want an entire room to himself or herself it can be afforded.

An ingenious statistician, taking the statement made in Revelation, twenty-first chapter, that the heavenly Jerusalem was measured and found to be twelve thousand furlongs, and that the length and height and breadth of it are equal, says that would make heaven in size nine hundred and forty-eight sextillion, nine hundred and eighty-eight quintillion cubic feet; and then reserving a certain portion for the court of heaven and the streets, and estimating that the world may last a hundred thousand years, he ciphers out that there are over five trillion rooms, each room seventeen feet long, sixteen feet wide, fifteen feet high. But I have no faith in the accuracy of that calculation. He makes the rooms too small. From all I can read, the rooms will be palatial, and those who have not had enough room in this world will have plenty of room at the last. The fact is, that most people in this world are crowded, and the cradle is crowded by other cradles, and the graves crowded in the cemetery by other graves; and one of the richest luxuries of many people in getting out of this world will be the gaining of unhindered and uncramped room. And I should not wonder if, instead of the room that the statistician ciphered out as only seventeen feet by sixteen, it should be larger than any of the rooms at Berlin, St. James, or Winter Palace. "In my Father's house are many rooms."

I hope none of us will be disappointed about getting there. There is a room for us, if we will go and take it, but in order to reach it, it is absolutely necessary that

we take the right way, and Christ is the way; and we must enter at the right door, and Christ is the door; and we must start in time, and the only hour you are sure of is the hour the clock now strikes, and the only second the one your watch is now ticking. I hold in my hand a roll of letters inviting you to make your home forever. The New Testament is only a roll of letters inviting you, as the spirit of them practically says: "My dying, yet immortal, child in earthly neighborhood, I have built for you a great residence. It is full of rooms. I have furnished them as no palace was ever furnished. Pearls are nothing, emeralds are nothing, chrysoprasus is nothing; illumined panels of sunrise and sunset, nothing; the aurora of the northern heavens, nothing—compared with the splendor with which I have garnished them. But you must be clean before you can enter there, and so I have opened a fountain where you may wash all your sins away. Come now! Put your weary but cleansed feet on the upward pathway. Do you not see amid the thick foliage on the heavenly hilltops the old family homestead? 'In my Father's house are many rooms.' "

XXXII

A Dead Lion

Few things in the versatile and comprehensive Bible interest me so much as its apothegms—those short, terse, sententious, epigrammatic sayings of which my text is one: “A living dog is better than a dead lion.”

Here the lion stands for nobility and the dog for meanness. The dog mentioned is not one of our American or English or Scottish dogs that in our mind is a synonym for the beautiful, the graceful, the affectionate, the sagacious and the true. The St. Bernard dog is a hero, and if you doubt it, ask the snows of the Alps, out of which he packed the exhausted traveler. The shepherd dog is a poem, and if you doubt it ask the Highlands of Scotland. The Arctic dog is the rescuer of explorers, and if you doubt it ask Dr. Kane’s expedition. The watch dog is a loving protection, and if you doubt it ask ten thousand homesteads over whose safety he watched last night. But Solomon lived in Jerusalem and the dog he speaks of was a dog in Jerusalem. One December I passed days and nights within a stone’s throw of where Solomon wrote this text, and from what I saw of the canines of Jerusalem by day and heard of them by night I can understand the slight appreciation he puts on the dog of Palestine. It is lean and snarly, and disgusting, and afflicted with parasites, and takes revenge on the human race by filling the nights with clamor.

All up and down the Bible, the most of which was written in Palestine or Syria or contiguous lands, the dog

is used in contemptuous comparison. On the other hand the lion is healthy, strong and loud-voiced, and at its roar the forests echo and the mountains tremble. It is marvelous for strength and when its hide is removed the muscular compactness is something wonderful, and the knife of the dissector bounds back from the tendons. By the clearing off of the forests of Palestine and the use of firearms, of which the lion is particularly afraid, they have disappeared from places where once they ranged; but they were very bold in olden times, they attacked the army of Xerxes while marching through Macedonia. As most of the Bible was written in regions lion-haunted, this creature appears in almost all parts as a simile. Now what does my text mean when it puts a living dog and a dead lion side by side and says the former is better than the latter? It means small faculties actively used are of more value than great faculties unemployed. How often we see it! Some man with limited capacity is vastly useful. There are tens of thousands of such people. Their circle of acquaintance is small. The man will never have his name in the newspapers but once, and that will be the announcement of his death, if some one will pay for the insertion, so much a line for the two lines. But God who has watched him all through will give him a grander eternity than many a man who had on earth before his name the word Honorable and after his name LL.D. and F.R.S.

The fact is that the world has been and is now full of dead lions. They are people of great capacity and large opportunity doing nothing for the improvement of society, nothing for the overthrow of evil, nothing for the salvation of souls. Some of them are monetary lions. They have accumulated so many hundreds of thousands of dollars that you can feel their tread when they walk through any street or come into any circle. They can

by one financial move upset the money market. Instead of the ten per cent of their income which the Bible lays down as the proper proportion of their contribution to the cause of God, they do not give five per cent, or three per cent, or two per cent. That they are lions no one doubts. When they roar, Wall Street, State Street, Lombard Street and the Bourse tremble. In a few years they will lie down and die. They will have a great funeral and a long line of carriages and mightiest of requiems will roll from the organ, and a polished shaft of Aberdeen granite will indicate where their dust lies, but for all the use to the world that man might as well have never lived. A lion! Yes; but a dead lion! He left all his treasures on earth and has no treasures in Heaven. What shall the stonecutter put upon the obelisk over him? I suggest let it be the man's name, then the date of his birth, then the date of his death, then the appropriate Scripture passage: "Better is a living dog than a dead lion."

Who would attempt to write the obituary of the dead lions of commerce, the dead lions of law, the dead lions of medicine, the dead lions of social influence? Vast capacity had they, and mighty range, and other men in their presence were as powerless as the antelope or heifer or giraffe when from the jungle a Numidian lion springs upon its prey. But they get through life. They lie down in their magnificent lair. They have made their last sharp bargain. They have spoken their last hard word. They have committed their last mean act. When a tawny inhabitant of the desert rolls over helpless the lioness and whelps fill the air with shrieks and howl and lash themselves into lamentation, and it is a genuine grief for the poor things. But when this dead lion of monstrous uselessness expires there is nothing but dramatized woe. "Better is a living dog than a dead lion."

My text also means that an opportunity of the living

present is better than a great opportunity past. We spend much of our time in saying: "If I only had." We can look back and see some occasion where we might have done a great deed, or might have effected an important rescue, or we might have dealt a stroke that would have accomplished a vast result. Through stupidity or lack of appreciation of the crisis or through procrastination we let the chance go by. How much time we have wasted in thinking of what we might have said or might have done! We spend hours and days and years in walking around that dead lion. We cannot resuscitate it. It will never open its eyes again. There will never be another spring in its paw. Dead as any feline terror of South Africa through whose heart forty years ago Gordon Cumming sent the slug. Don't let us give any more time to the deploring of the dead past. There are other opportunities remaining. Take what you have of opportunity left. Do your best with what remains. Your shortest winter day is worth more to you than can be the longest day of the previous summer. Your opportunity now as compared with previous opportunities may be small as a rat-terrier compared with the lion which, fatally wounded by the gun of David Livingstone, in its death agony leaped upon the missionary explorer, and with its jaws crushed the bone of his arm to splinters, and rolled over and expired, but "Better is a living dog than a dead lion."

After Charlemagne was dead he was set on an ornamented sepulcher on a throne, and a crown was put on his cold brow, and a scepter in his stiff hand, but that gave him no dominion in the next world. One of the most intensely interesting things I saw in Egypt was Pharaoh of olden times, the very Pharaoh who oppressed the Israelite. The inscriptions on his sarcophagus and the writing on his mummy bandages prove beyond con-

troversy that he was the Pharaoh of Bible times. All Egyptologists and explorers agree that it is the old scoundrel himself. Visible are the very teeth which he gnashed against the Israelitish brickmakers. There are the sockets of the merciless eyes with which he looked upon the overburdened people of God. There is the hair that floated in the breeze off the Red Sea. There are the very lips with which he commanded them to make bricks without straw. Thousands of years afterward when the wrappings of the mummy were unrolled, old Pharaoh lifted up his arm as if in imploration, but his skinny bones cannot again clutch his shattered scepter. He is a dead lion. And is not any man now living, in the fact that he has opportunity of repentance and salvation, better off than any of those departed ones who by authority or possessions or influence were positively leonine and yet wicked?

XXXIII

The Number Seven

The mathematics of the Bible is noticeable; the geometry and the arithmetic; the square in Ezekiel; the circle spoken of in Isaiah; the curve alluded to in Job; the rule of fractions mentioned in Daniel; the rule of loss and gain in Mark, where Christ asks the people to cipher out by that rule what it would "profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul." But there is one mathematical figure that is crowned above all others in the Bible; it is the numeral seven, which the Arabians got from India, and all following ages have taken from the Arabians. It stands between the figure six and the figure eight. In the Bible all the numerals bow to it. Over three hundred times is it mentioned in the Scriptures, either alone or compounded with other words. In Genesis the week is rounded into seven days, there this numeral is for the first time introduced in a journey which wends its way through the law, through symbolism of the tabernacle, and the ritual, and the prophecies, and halts not until in the close of the book of Revelations its monument is built into the wall of heaven in chrysolite, which, in the strata of precious stones, is the seventh.

In the Bible we find that Jacob had to serve seven years to get Rachel, but she was well worth it; and foretelling the years of prosperity and famine in Pharaoh's time, the seven fat oxen were eaten up of the seven lean oxen; and wisdom is said to be built on seven pillars; and the ark was left with the Philistines seven years; and

Naaman for the cure of his leprosy plunged in the Jordan seven times; the dead child, when Elisha breathed into its mouth, signaled its arrival back into consciousness by sneezing seven times; to the house that Ezekiel saw in a vision, there were seven steps; the walls of Jericho, before they fell down, were compassed seven days; Zechariah describes a stone with seven eyes; to cleanse a leprous house, the door must be sprinkled with pigeon blood seven times, in Canaan were overthrown seven nations; on one occasion Christ cast out seven devils; on a mountain he fed a multitude of people with seven loaves, the fragments left filling seven baskets; the closing passages of the Bible are magnificent and overwhelming with the imagery made up of seven crowns, and seven horns, and seven spirits, and seven vials, and seven plagues and seven thunders.

Yes, the numeral seven seems a favorite with the Divine mind, outside as well as inside the Bible, for are there not seven prismatic colors? And when God with the rainbow wrote the comforting thought that the world would never have another deluge, he wrote it on the scroll of the sky in ink of seven colors. He grouped into the Pleiades seven stars. Rome, the capital of the world, sat on seven hills. When God would make the most intelligent thing on earth, the human countenance, he fashioned it with seven features—the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils and the mouth. Yes, our body lasts only seven years, and we gradually shed it for another body after another seven years, and so on; for we are, as to our bodies septennial animals. So the numeral seven ranges through nature and through Revelation. It is the number of perfection and so I use it while I speak of the seven candlesticks, the seven stars, the seven seals, and the seven thunders.

The seven candlesticks were and are the churches.

Mark you, the churches never were and never can be candles. They are only candlesticks. They are not the light, but they hold the light. A room in the night might have in it five hundred candlesticks, and yet you could not see your hand before your face. The only use of a candlestick, and the only use of a church is to hold the light. You see it is a dark world, the night of sin, the night of trouble, the night of superstition, the night of persecution, the night of poverty, the night of sickness, the night of death; aye, about fifty nights have interlocked their shadows. The whole race goes stumbling over prostrated hopes and fallen fortunes and empty flour barrels and desolated cradles and deathbeds. How much we have use for all the seven candlesticks, with lights blazing from the top of each one of them! Light of pardon for all sin! Light of comfort for all trouble! Light of encouragement for all despondency! Light of eternal riches for all poverty! Light of rescue for all persecution! Light of reunion for all the bereft! Light of heaven for all the dying! And that light is Christ, who is the Light that shall yet irradiate the hemispheres. But, mark you, when I say churches are but candlesticks, I cast no slur on candlesticks. The candlesticks that God ordered for the ancient tabernacle were something exquisite. They were a dream of loveliness. They were made of hammered gold, stood in a foot of gold and had six branches of gold blooming all along in six lilies of gold each, and lips of gold from which the candles lifted their holy fire. And the best houses in any city should be the churches—the best built, the best ventilated, the best swept, the best windowed and the best chandeliered. Log cabins may do for neighborhoods where most of the people live in log cabins; but let there be palatial churches for regions where many of the people live in palaces. Do not have a better place for yourself than for your Lord

and King. Have everything about your church bright—your ushers with smiling faces, your music jubilant, your hand shaking cordial, your entire service attractive. Many people feel that in church they must look dull in order to be reverential and many whose faces in other kinds of assemblages show all the different phases of emotion have in church no more expression than the back wheel of a hearse. Brighten up and be responsive. If you feel like weeping, weep. If you feel like smiling, smile. If you feel indignant at some wrong assailed from the pulpit, frown. Do not leave your naturalness and resiliency home because it is Sunday morning. If as officers of a church you meet people at the church door with a black look, and have the music black and the minister in black preach a black sermon and from invocation to benediction have the impression black, few will come; and those who do come will wish they had not come at all.

Golden candlesticks! Scour up the six lilies on each branch and know that the more lovely and bright they are, the more fit they are to hold the light. But a Christless light is a damage to the world rather than good. Seven candlesticks the complete number of lights! Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Turn now in your Bible to the seven stars. We are distinctly told that they are the ministers of religion. Some are large stars, some of them small stars, some of them sweep a wide circuit and some of them a small circuit, but so far as they are genuine, they get their light from the great central Sun around whom they make their revolution. Let each one keep in his own sphere. The solar system would be soon wrecked if the stars, instead of keeping their own orbits, should go hunting down other stars. Ministers of religion should never

clash. But in all the centuries of the Christian church some of these stars have been hunting others; and the stars that were in pursuit of the other stars lost their own orbit and some of them could never again find it. Alas, for the heresy hunters! The best way to destroy error is to preach the truth. The best way to scatter darkness is to strike a light. There is in immensity room enough for all the stars, and in the church room enough for all the ministers. The ministers who give up righteousness and the truth will get punishment enough anyhow for they are "the wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

I should like as a minister, when I am dying, to be able truthfully to say what a captain of the English army, fallen at the head of his column and dying on the Egyptian battlefield said to General Wolseley who came to condole with him: "I led them straight; didn't I lead them straight, general?" God has put us ministers in this battlefield of truth against error. Great at last will be our chagrin if we fall leading the people the wrong way, but great will be our gladness if when the battle is over we can hand our sword back to our great commander, saying: "Lord Jesus, we led the people straight; didn't we lead them straight?" Those ministers who go off at a tangent and preach some other gospel are not stars, but comets, and they flash across the heavens a little while and make people stare, and throw down a few meteoric stones and then go out of sight if not out of existence. Brethren in the ministry, let us remember that God calls us stars and our business is to shine and keep our own sphere and then when we have finished trying to light up the darkness of this world, we will wheel into higher spheres, and in us shall be fulfilled the promise "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

I pass on to another mighty Bible seven, and they are the seven seals. St. John in vision saw a scroll with seven seals and he heard an angel say: "Who is worthy to loose the seals thereof?" Now that scroll with seven seals held by the angel was the prophecy of what was to come on the earth; it meant that the knowledge of the future was with God and no man and no angel was worthy to open it; but the Bible says Christ opened it and broke all the seven seals. Well, the future of all of us is a sealed scroll, and I am glad that no one but Christ can open it. Do not let us join that class of Christians in our day who are trying to break the seven seals of the future. They are trying to peep into things they have no business with. Do not go to some necromancer or spiritualist or soothsayer or fortune-teller to find out what is going to happen to yourself or your family or your friends. Wait till Christ breaks the seal to find out whether in your own personal life, or the life of the nation, or the life of the world, it is going to be the white horse of prosperity or the red horse of war or the black horse of famine; you will soon enough see him paw and hear him neigh. Take care of the present and the future will take care of itself. Keep your hand off the seven seals.

There is another mighty seven in the Bible, the seven thunders. What those seven thunders meant we are not told, and there has been much guessing about them; but they are to come, we are told before the end of all things, and the world cannot get along without them. Thunder is the speech of lightning. There are evils in our world which must be thundered down, and which will require at least seven volleys to prostrate them. We are doing nice, delicate, soft-handed work in churches and reformatory institutions, against the evils in our world, and much of it amounts to a teaspoon dipping out the Atlantic Ocean, or a clam shell digging away at a mountain, or a

tack-hammer smiting Gibraltar. What is needed is thunderbolts and at least seven of them.

O men and women, disheartened at the bad way things often go, hear you not a rumbling down the sky of heavy artillery, coming on our side, the seven thunders of the Almighty? Do not let us try to wield them ourselves; they are too heavy and too fiery for us to handle; but God can and God will; and when all mercy has failed and all milder means are exhausted, then judgment will begin. Thunderbolts? Depend upon it that what is not done under the flash of the seven candlesticks will be done by the trampling of the seven thunders.

XXXIV

Distribution of Spoils

The heavenly distribution of spoils will be a surprise to many. Here enters heaven the soul of a man who took up a great deal of room in the Church on earth, but sacrificed little, and among his good works selfishness was evident. He just crowds through the shining gate, but it is a very tight squeeze, so that the doorkeeper has to pull hard to get him in, and this man expects half of heaven for his share of trophies, and he would like a monopoly of all its splendor, and to purchase lots in the suburbs, so that he could get advantages from the growth of the city.

Well, he had a little grace of heart, just enough to get him through, and to him is given a second-hand crown, which one of the saints wore at the start, but exchanged for a brighter one as he went on from glory to glory, and he is put in an old house once occupied by an angel who was hurled out of heaven at the time of Satan's rebellion.

Right after him comes a soul that makes a great stir among the celestials, and the angels rush to the scene, each bringing to her a dazzling coronet. Who is she? Over what realm on earth was she queen? In what great Düsseldorf festival was she the cantatrice? Neither. She was an invalid who never left her room for twenty years; but she was strong in prayer, and she prayed down revival after revival, and pentecost after pentecost, upon the churches, and with her pale hands she knit many a mitten or tippet for the poor, and with her contrivances

she added joy to many a holiday festival; and now, with those thin hands so strong for kindness, and those white lips so strong for supplication, she has won coronation, and enthronement, and jubilee.

But notice that there is only one being who can and will distribute the trophies of earth and heaven. It is the divine warrior, the commander-in-chief of the centuries, the champion of the ages, the universal conqueror, the Son of God—Jesus. Have his friendship and you may defy all time and all eternity, but without it you were a pauper, though you had a universe at your command. We are told in Revelation that Jacob's twelve sons were so honored as to have the twelve gates of heaven named after them. But Christ's name is written over all the gates, and on every panel of the gates, and have his help, his pardon, his intercession, his atonement, I must or be a forlorn wretch forever.

What a day it will be when Christ shall divide the spoil. It was a great day when Queen Victoria in the midst of the Crimean War distributed medals to the soldiers who had come home sick and wounded. At the Horse Guards, in the presence of the royal family, the injured men were carried in or came in on crutches and with her own hand the Queen gave each the Crimean medal. And what triumphant days for those soldiers when, further on, they received the French medal with the Imperial eagle and the Turkish medal with its representation of four flags—France, Turkey, England, and Sardinia—and beneath it a map of the Crimea spread over a gun-wheel.

And what rewards are suggested to all readers of history by the mere mention of the Waterloo medal, and the Cape medal and Gold-cross medal, and the medal struck for bravery in our American wars! But how insignificant are all these compared with the day when the good sol-

diers of Jesus Christ shall come out of the battles of this world, and in the presence of all the piled-up glories of the redeemed and unfallen. Jesus our King shall divide the spoil! The more wounds the greater the inheritance. The longer the forced march the brighter the trophy. The more terrific the exhaustion the more glorious the transport. Not the gift of a brilliant ribbon or a medal of brass or silver or gold, but a kingdom in which we are to reign for ever and ever. Mansions on the eternal hills. Dominions of unfading power. Empires of unending love. Continents of everlasting light. Atlantic and Pacific Oceans of billowing joy.

How great the day when our conquerer, Jesus, shall ride under the triumphant arches of heaven, his captives not on foot but in chariots, all the kingdoms of heaven and earth in procession. The armies celestial on white horses, rumbling artillery of thunderbolts never again to be unlimbered, kingdoms in line, centuries in line, saintly, cherubic, seraphic, archangelic splendors in line, and Christ, seated on one great rolling hosanna, made out of all the hallelujahs of all the world, shall cry, "Halt" to the procession. And not forgetting even the humblest in all the reach of his omnipresence, he shall rise and then and there, his work done and his glory consummated, proceed, amid ecstasy such as neither mortal nor immortal ever imagined, to divide the spoil.

The Sundial of Ahaz

The first clock or watch or chronometer or timepiece of which the world has any knowledge was a watch that did not tick and a clock that did not strike. It was a sundial. Ahaz, the king, between the hours given to statecraft and the cares of office, invented something by which he could tell the time of day. This sundial may have been a great column, and when the shadow of that column reached one point it was nine o'clock A.M. and when it reached another point it was three o'clock P.M. and all the hours and half hours were so measured. Or it might have been a flight of stairs such as may now be found in Hindustan and other countries and when the shadow reached one step it was ten o'clock A.M. and another step it was four o'clock P.M. and likewise other hours may have been indicated.

We are told that Hezekiah, the king, was dying of a boil. Hezekiah did not want to die then. His son who was to take the kingdom had not yet been born and Hezekiah's death would have been the death of the nation. So he prays for recovery and is told he will get well. But he wants some miraculous sign to make him sure of it. He has the choice of having the shadow on the sundial of Ahaz advance or retreat. He asks that it go backward. I see the invalid king bolstered up, and wrapped in blankets looking out of the window upon the sundial in the courtyard. While he watches the shadow on the dial begins to retreat.

Now I expect you will come on with your higher criticism and try to explain this away and say it was an

optical delusion of Hezekiah and the shadow only seemed to go back or a cloud came over and it was uncertain which way the shadow did go, and as Hezekiah expected it to go back he took the action of his own mind for the retrograde movement. No, the shadow went back on all the dials of that land and other lands. Turn to II Chronicles 32: 31 and find that away off in Babylon the mighty men of the palace noticed the same phenomenon. And if you do not like Bible authority turn over to your copy of Herodotus and find that away off in Egypt the people noticed that there was something the matter with the sun. The fact is the whole universe waits upon God, and suns and moons and stars are not very big things to him and he can with his little finger turn back an entire world as easily as you can set back the hour hand or minute hand of your clock or watch.

We are all ready to acknowledge God's management of the sunshine. We stand in the glow of a bright morning, and we say in our feelings if not in our words, "This life is from God, this warmth is from God." Oh, yes, we acknowledge God in the sunshine of a bright day or the sunshine of a great prosperity. But suppose the day is dark? The sun does not show himself all day long. There is nothing but shadow. I cannot look for one moment on that retrograde shadow on Ahaz' dial without learning that God controls the shadows and that lesson we need all to learn. Any one can be happy when things go right. But for those in just the opposite circumstances the lesson from the sundial of Ahaz comes in with an omnipotence of meaning. The shadow! Oh, the shadow! Shadow of bereavement! Shadow of sickness! Shadow of bankruptcy! Shadow of mental depression! Shadow of persecution! Shadow of death! Speak out, O sundial of Ahaz, and tell all the people that God manages the shadow! As Hezekiah sat in his

palace window wrapped in invalidism and surrounded by anodynes and cataplasms and looked out upon the black hand of the only clock known at that time and saw it move back ten degrees he learned a lesson that a majority of the human race needs this hour to learn—that the best friend a man ever had controls the shadow. The setbacks are sometimes the best things that can happen. The great German Schiller could not work unless he had in his room the scent of rotten apples; and the decay of the fruit of earthly prosperity may become an inspiration instead of a depression.

Looking at this sundial of Ahaz I see the shadow of it move. I notice that it went back toward the sunrise instead of forward toward the sunset. Toward the morning instead of toward the night. There have been a great many things written and spoken about the sunset of life. I have said some of them myself. But the Lord who turned back that day from going toward sundown and started it toward sunrise is willing to do the same thing for all of us. The theologians who stick to old religious technicalities until they become soporifics would not call it anything but conversion. I call it a change from going toward sundown to going toward sunrise. That man who never tries to unbuckle the clasp of evil habit and who keeps all the sins of the past and the present freighting him and who ignores the one redemption made by the only One who could redeem, if that man will examine the sundial he will find that the shadow is going forward and he is on the way to sundown. His road is on the way to night. All the watches that tick, all the clocks that strike, all the sand-glasses that empty themselves, all the shadows that move on, all the sundials indicate the approach of darkness. But now in answer to prayer, the change was in answer to prayer, the pardoning Lord reverses things and the man starts towards sunrise instead of sunset. He turns the other way. The Captain of

Salvation gives the military command "Attention! Right about face!" He saw men marching toward indifference, marching toward hardness of heart, marching toward prayerlessness, marching toward sin, marching toward gloom, marching toward death. Now he turns and marches toward peace, marches toward light and marches toward comfort and marches toward high hope and marches toward triumph, stupendous and everlasting, toward hosannas that ever hoist and hallelujahs that ever roll. Now if that is not the turning of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz from going toward sundown to going toward sunrise, what is it?

I have seen day break over Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn, over the heights of Lebanon, over Mount Washington, over the Sierra Nevadas, and mid-Atlantic, the morning after a departed storm when the billows were liquid Alps and liquid Sierra Nevadas; but the sunrise of the soul is more effulgent and more transporting. It bathes all the heights of the soul and illumines all the depth of the soul and whelms all the faculties, all the aspirations, all the ambitions, all the hopes with a light that sickness cannot eclipse or death extinguish or eternity do anything but augment and magnify. I preach the sunrise. As I look at that retrograde movement of the shadows on Ahaz' dial, I remember that it was a sign that Hezekiah was going to get well and he got well. So I have to tell all you who are by the grace of God having your day turned from decline toward night to ascent toward morning, that you are going to get well—well of all your sins, well of all your sorrows, well of all your earthly distresses. Sunrise! What a sunrise! Do you not feel its warmth on your faces? Scovill McCullum, the dying boy of our Sunday school uttered what shall be the peroration of the sermon, "Throw back the shutters and let the sun in!" And so the shadow of Ahaz' sundial turns from sunset to sunrise.

Wonders of the Hand

Fourteen hundred and thirty-three times, as nearly as I can count by aid of concordance, does the Bible speak of the human hand. We are all familiar with the hand, but the man has yet to be born who can fully understand this wondrous instrument.

So we are all going on opening and shutting this divinely constructed instrument—the hand—ignorant of much of the revelation it was intended to make of the wisdom and goodness of God. You can see by their structure that shoulder and elbow and forearm are getting ready for the culmination in the hand. The whole anatomy of your hand is as complex, as intricate, as symmetrical, as useful as God could make it. What can it not do? It can climb, it can lift, it can push, it can repel, it can menace, it can clutch, it can deny, it can affirm, it can extend, it can weave, it can bathe, it can smite, it can humble, it can exalt, it can soothe, it can throw, it can defy, it can wave, it can imprecate, it can pray.

With the Divine help I shall speak of the hand as the chief executive officer of the soul, whether lifted for defense or extended for help or busied in the arts or offered in salutation, or wrung in despair, or spread abroad in benediction. God evidently intended that all the lower orders of living beings should have weapons of defense, hence, the elephant's tusk and the horse's hoof and the cow's horn and the lion's tooth and the insect's sting. Having given weapons of defense to the lower orders

of living beings, of course he would not leave man, the highest order of living beings on earth, defenseless and at the mercy of brutal or ruffian attack. The right, yes, the duty of self-defense is so evident it needs no argumentation. The hand is the divinely fashioned weapon of defense. We may seldom have to use it for such purposes, but the fact that we are so equipped insures safety. The hand is a weapon sooner loaded than any gun, sooner drawn than any sword. Its fingers bent into the palm, it becomes a bolt of demolition. Solomon speaks of the hands as the "keepers of the house" or the defenders. Surely, such a castle as the human body needs such protection as the hand alone can offer.

What a defense it is against accident! There have been times in all our experiences when we have with the hand warded off something that would have extinguished our eyesight or broken the skull or crippled us for life-time. While the eye has discovered the approaching peril the hand has beaten it back or struck it down or disarmed it. Every day thank God for your right hand, and if you want to hear its eulogy ask him who in swift revolution of machinery has had it crushed or at Chapultepec or San Juan Hill or Sedan lost it.

Again the hand is the chief executive officer of the soul for affording help. Just see how that hand is constructed. How easily you can lower it to raise the fallen. How easily it is extended to feel the invalid's pulse or gently wipe away the tears of orphanage or contribute alms or smooth the excited brow or beckon into safety. Oh, the helping hands! There are hundreds of thousands of them, and the world wants at least sixteen hundred millions of them. Hands to bless others; hands to rescue others; hands to save others. What are all these schools and churches and asylums of mercy? Outstretched hands. What are all those distributing tracts and carry-

ing medicines and trying to cure blind eyes and deaf ears and broken bones and disordered intellects and wayward sons? Helping hands. Let each one of us add to that number if we have two, or if through casualty only one add that one. If these hands which we have so long kept thrust into pockets through indolence or folded in indifference or employed in writing wrong things or doing mean things or heaving up obstacles in the way of righteous progress, might from this hour be consecrated to helping others out and up and on, they would be hands worth being raised on the Resurrection morn, and worth clapping in eternal gladness over a world redeemed.

The great artists of the ages—Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci and Quentin Matsys and Rembrandt and Albert Dürer and Titian—have done their best in picturing the face of Christ, but none except Ary Scheffer seems to have put much stress upon the hand of Christ. Indeed, the mercy of that hand, the gentleness of that hand, is beyond all artistic portrayal. Some of his miracles he performed by word of mouth and without touching the subject before him, but most of them he performed through the hand. Was the dead damsel to be raised to life? “He took her by the hand.” Was the blind man to have the optic nerve restored? “He took him by the hand.” Was the demon to be exorcized from a suffering man? “He took the man by the hand.” The people saw this and besought him to put his hand on their afflicted ones.

His own hands free, see how the Lord sympathized with the man who had lost the use of his hand. It was a case of atrophy, a wasting away until the arm and hand had been reduced in size beyond any medical or surgical restoration. Christ looked at that shriveled-up right hand, dangling uselessly at the man’s side and then cried out with a voice that had omnipotence in it:

“Stretch forth thy hand,” and the record is, “he stretched it forth whole as the other.” The blood rushed through the shrunken veins, and the shortened muscles lengthened, and the dead nerves thrilled, and the lifeless fingers tingled with resumed circulation, and the restored man held up in the presence of the skeptical Pharisees one of Jehovah’s masterpieces—a perfect hand. No wonder that story is put three times in the Bible, so that if a sailor were cast away on a barren island, or a soldier’s New Testament got mutilated in battle and whole pages are destroyed, the shipwrecked or wounded man in hospital would probably have at least one of those three radiant stories of what Christ thought of the human hand.

How often the hand has decided the destiny! Mary, Queen of Scots, was escaping from imprisonment at Loch Leven in the dress of a laundress and had her face thickly veiled. When a boatman attempted to remove the veil she put up her hand to defend it, and so revealed the white and fair hand of a queen, and so the boatman took her back to captivity. Again and again it has been demonstrated that the hand hath a language as certainly as the mouth.

Again as the chief executive officer of the soul behold the hand busy with the arts! What a comparatively dull place this world would be without pictures, without statuary, without music, without architecture. Have you ever realized what fifty seeming miracles are in the five minutes’ fingering of piano or harp or flute? Who but the eternal God could make a hand capable of that swift sweep of the keys, or that quick feeling of the pulses of a flute or the twirl of the fingers amid the strings of the harp? All the composers of music who dreamed out the oratorios and the cantatas of the ages would have had their work dropped flat and useless but for the translations of the hand. Under the deft fingers

of the performer, what cavalries gallop and what batteries boom and what birds carol and what tempests march and what oceans billow! The great architects of the earth might have thought out the Alhambras and the Parthenons and the St. Sophias and the Taj Mahals, but all those visions would have vanished had it not been for the hand on hammer or plummet, on trowel, on wall, on arch, on pillar, on stairs, on dome.

In two discourses, one concerning the ear and the other concerning the eye, I spoke from the potent test in the psalm, "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear," and "He that formed the eye, shall he not see," but what use is the eye and what use is the ear if the hand had not been strung with all its nerves and moved with all its muscles and reticulated with all its joints and strengthened with all its bones and contrived with all its ingenuities. The hand hath forwarded all the arts and tunneled the mountains through which the rail-train thunders, and launched all the shipping, and fought all the battles and built all the temples and swung all the cables under the sea, as well as lifted to mid-air the wire tracks on which whole trains of thought rush across the continents, and built all the cities and hoisted the pyramids.

Do not eulogize the eye and ear at the expense of the hand, for the eye may be blotted out as in the case of Milton, and yet his hand writes a *Paradise Lost*; as in the case of William Prescott, and yet his hand may write the enchanting *Conquest of Peru*; or the ear may be silenced forever, as in the case of Beethoven, and yet his hand may put into immortal cadences the Ninth Symphony. Oh, the hand! The God-fashioned hand! The triumphant hand! It is an open Bible of divine revelation, and the five fingers are the Isaiah and the Ezekiel and the David and the Micah, and the Paul of that almighty inspiration.

Again the hand is the chief executive officer of the soul when wrung in agony. Tears of relief are sometimes denied to trouble. The eyelids at such time are as hot and parched and burning as the brow. At such time even the voice is suppressed, and there is no sob or outcry. The wringing of the hand tells the story. So a man wrings his hands over the casket of a dead wife. When there are sorrows too poignant for lamentation of the lip, and too hot for the tear-glands to write in letters of crystal on the cheek, the hand recites the tragedy with more emphasis than anything in Macbeth and King Lear.

Worse than the wringing of the hands was the punishment that Cranmer gave his right hand when he put it in the fire of the stake and without flinching said: "For as much as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall therefore be the first punished. It shall be the first burned. This was the hand that wrote it."

He who knows how heartily to shake hands has one of the mightiest arts for conveying happiness and good cheer and life eternal. After you have shaken hands with one a line of communication is open that was not open before. Two hands clasped in greeting are a bridge on which all sympathies and kindnesses and encouragements and blessings cross over. To shake hands with some persons does us more good than a sermon—aye! it is a sermon. To shake hands with a good doctor when we are sick is an anodyne, a tonic, a febrifuge. To shake hands with a cheerful man when we are discouraged fills us with faith to try again what we have failed in doing. To shake hands with some consecrated man, clerical or lay, after we have wandered away into sin, is to feel the grasp of the father. God welcoming home the prodigal. Shake hands, O ye stolid and exclusive and cold and precise and conventional Christians! Jehu cried out to

Jehonadab: "Is thine heart right? If it be, give me thine hand."

Of course, there is a wicked shaking of hands, and Solomon refers to it when he says: "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." Shake hands in conspiracy to damage individual or community or nation; shake hands to defraud; shake hands to stand by each other in wrongdoing—you help me stuff this ballot-box, and I will see that when I am in power you shall have promotion; you help me in my infamy and I will help you in your infamy. Oh, that is profanation of a holy rite; that is sacrilege against a divine arrangement; that is gripping your own destruction! Pilate and Herod, though antagonists before, shook hands over Christ's projected assassination.

Again the hand is the chief executive of the soul when employed in benediction. No gesture of the human hand means more than that outstretched gesture. In many of our religious denominations we are not permitted to pronounce an apostolic benediction until we have been regularly ordained as ministers of the Gospel; but there are kinds of benediction that you may all pronounce without especial permission from the Presbytery or Conference or Convention. You have a right to spread abroad both right hand and left hand in bestowing a blessing of kindness and good-will upon all you meet. With both hands bless the children. Take them in your arms and kiss their fair cheek. Take with them a round of merriment in the room before you leave it; and by prayer put them in the arms of that Christ, to go to whom in olden times they struggled to get out of the arms of their mothers. God bless the cradles and high-chairs and nurseries all round the world. Extend your hands in benediction for the aged. Take their counsel and ask their prayers and smooth the path down the declivities. Spread your hand

for the benediction upon all the men and women in the tug-of-life, many of them tired and buffeted and disheartened. Never go out of a store or a shop or office or field without pronouncing a benediction.

And what better use can I make of my hands, which are the chief executive officer of my soul, than now to spread them abroad on the apostolic benediction which has been pronounced for centuries, and over hundreds of thousands of assemblages, at coronations and obsequies, at harvest-homes and on fast days, by all the ministers of the Gospel in the past as it will be by all the ministers of the Gospel until the church militant reaches up its right hand to take the right hand of the Church triumphant; a benediction which, when it has full sway, will leave nothing for our world to want, or heaven to bestow; "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all forever. Amen."

XXXVII

The Spirit of Encouragement

Everybody has burdens. Sometimes they come down on the shoulders. Sometimes they come down on the head; sometimes they come down on the heart. Looking over any assemblage, they all seem well and bright and easy; but each one has a burden to lift, and some of them have more than they can lift. Paul proposes to split up these burdens into fragments; you take part of mine, and I must take part of yours, and each one will take part of the other's and so we will fulfill the law of Christ. What you and I most need to learn is the spirit of helpfulness.

Encourage the merchant. Be not afraid that he will become arrogant by your approval. Before night some shop-going person will come in and tell him that his prices are exorbitant, and that his goods are of an inferior quality, and that his show-windows gave promise of far better things than is found inside. If the merchant be a grocer, there will be some one before night who will come into his establishment, and taste of this and taste of that and taste of everything else, in that way stealing all the profits of anything that he may purchase—buying three apples while he eats one orange! Before the night of the day when you approve that merchant he will have a bad debt which he will have to charge to profit and loss—a bad debt made by some one who has moved away from the neighborhood without giving any hint of the place of destination. Before night there will be enough

unpleasant things said to keep him from becoming apoplectic with plethora of praise.

Encourage newspaper men. If you knew how many annoyances they have, if you understood that their most elaborate article is sometimes thrown out because there is such great pressure on the columns, and that an accurate report of a speech is expected, although the utterance be so indistinct that the discourse is one long stenographic guess, and that the midnight which finds you asleep demands that they be awake, and that they are sometimes ground between the wheels of our great brain manufactories; sickened at the frequent approach of men who want newspaper retraction; one day sent to report a burial, the next day to report a pugilistic encounter; shifted from place to place by sudden revolution which is liable to take place any day in our great journalistic establishments; precarious life becoming more and more precarious—if you understood it you would be more sympathetic. Be affable when you have not an ax to be sharpened on their grindstone. Consider what the nineteenth century would be without the newspaper and give encouraging words to all who are engaged in this interest, from the chief of the editorial department down to the boy who throws the morning and evening paper into your basement window.

Encourage the mechanics. They will plumb the pipes, or they will kalsomine the ceilings, or they will put down the carpets, or they will grain the doors, or they will fashion the wardrobe. Be not among those who never say anything to the mechanic except to find fault. You feel you have the right to find fault when he does ill. Do you ever praise a mechanic when he does well?

Encourage the farmers. They come into your stores, you often associate with them in the summer months, office seekers go through the land and they stand on po-

litical platforms, and they enlarge to the farmers on the independent life of a farmer, giving flattery where they ought to give sympathy. Independent of what? I was brought up on a farm, I worked on a farm, I know all about it. I hardly saw a city until I was full grown, and I tell you that there is no class of people in this country who have it harder and who more need your sympathy than farmers. Independent of what? Of the curculio that stings the peach trees? of the rust in the wheat? of the long rain with the rye down? Independent of the grasshopper? of the locust? of the army worm? of the potato bug? Independent of the drought that burns up the harvest? Independent of the cow with the hollow horn? Or the sheep with the foot rot? Or the pet horse with a nail in his hoof? Independent of the cold that freezes out the winter grain? Independent of the snow bank out of which he must shovel himself? Independent of what? Fancy farmers who have made their fortunes in the city and go out in the country to build houses with all the modern improvements, and make farming a luxury, may not need any solace; but the yeomanry who get their living out of the soil, and who in that way have to clothe their families and educate their children and pay their taxes and meet the interest on mortgaged farms—such men find a terrific struggle.

Encourage the doctors. You praise the doctor when he brings you up from an awful crisis of disease, but do you praise the doctor when through skillful treatment of the incipient stages of disease he keeps you from sinking down to the awful crisis? They stand between our families and the grave, fighting back the troops of disorder that come up from their encampment by the cold river. No one hears such thanks as the doctor hears. They are eyes to the blind, they are feet to the lame, their path is strewn with the benedictions of those whom they have

befriended but physicians have so many hardships, so many interruptions, so many annoyances, I am glad they have so many encouragements.

Encourage the lawyers. They are often cheated out of their fees, and so often have to breathe the villainous air of court-rooms, and they so often have to maintain against the sharks in their profession the dignity to that calling which was honored by the fact that the only man allowed to stand on Mount Sinai beside the Lord was Moses, the lawyer, and that the Bible speaks of Christ as the Advocate. Encourage lawyers in their profession of transcendent importance.

Encourage the teachers in our schools—occupation arduous and poorly compensated. In all the cities when there comes a spell of economy on the part of officials, the first thing to do is always to cut down teachers' salaries. To take forty or fifty boys whose parents suppose them precocious and keep the parents from finding out their mistake; to take an empty head and fill it; to meet the expectation of parents who think their children at fifteen years of age ought to be mathematicians and metaphysicians and rhetoricians; to work successfully that great stuffing machine and modern school system is a very arduous work. Encourage them for the usefulness and lasting value and the magnitude of their occupation and when your children do well, compliment the instructor, praise the teacher, thank the educator.

Encourage all starting in life. And if you have nothing to say that is encouraging, O man! put your teeth tightly together and cover them with the curtain of your lip; compress your lips and put your hand over your mouth and keep still.

Encourage the troubled by thoughts of release and reunion. Encourage the aged by thoughts of eternal juvenescence. Encourage the herdsman amid the troughs

of sin to go back to the banquet at the father's homestead. Give tones in the major key instead of the minor. You have seen cars so arranged that one car going down-hill drew another car up the hill. They nearly balanced each other. And every man that finds life up-hill ought to be helped by those who have passed the heights and are descending to the vale. Oh, let us bear one another's burdens!

Since Christ bore our burdens, surely we can afford to bear those of others.

XXXVIII

The Ballot-Box

The cornerstones of all morality, of all wise law, of all righteous jurisprudence, of all good government, are the two tablets of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments.

All Roman law, all French law, all English law, all American law that is worth anything, all common law, civil law, martial law, law of nations, were rocked in the cradle of the twentieth chapter of Exodus. And it would be well in these times of great political agitation if the newspapers would print the Decalogue some day in place of the able editorial. But let the Ten Commandments loose upon the great political parties of our day and there would be wild panic.

The fact is that some people suppose that the law has passed out of existence, and some are not aware of some of the passages of that law, and others say this, or that, is of the more importance, when no one has any right to make such an assertion. These laws are the pillars of society, and if you remove one pillar you damage the whole structure. I have noticed that men are particularly vehement against sins to which they are not particularly tempted and find no especial wrath against sins in which they themselves indulge. They take out one gun from this battery of ten guns, and load that, and unlimber that, and fire that. They say: "This is an Armstrong gun, and this a Krupp gun, and this is a Gatling ten-barreled gun, and this a Martin thirty-seven barreled gun." But I

have to tell them that they are all of the same caliber, and that they shoot from eternity to eternity.

Many questions are before the people in the elections all over the land; the most important thing to be settled about the candidates is their personal, moral character.

Of course we shall not find anything like perfection. If we do not vote until we find an immaculate nominee we will never vote at all. We have so many faults of our own we ought not to be censorious or maledictory or hypocritical in regard to the faults of others. The Christly rule is as appropriate for November as any other month in the year, and for the fourth year as for the preceding years: "Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

Most certainly are we not to take the statement of red-hot partisanship as the real character of any man. From nearly all the great cities of this land I receive daily and weekly newspapers sent to me regularly, and in complement, so I see both sides—I see all sides—and it is most entertaining, and my regular amusement, to read the opposite statements. The one statement says a man is an angel, and the other says he is a devil; and I split the difference and I find him half-way between. There has never been an honest or respectable man running for the United States Presidency since the foundation of the American Government if we may believe the old files of newspapers in the museums. What a mercy they were not all hung before inauguration day! You must admit it is a very difficult thing in times like these to get a very accurate estimate of a man's character, and I charge you to caution.

However much a man may have, and however high the position he gets, he has no especial liberty given him in the interpretation of the Ten Commandments. A great

sinner is no more to be excused than a small sinner. Do not charge illustrious defection to eccentricity, or chop off the Ten Commandments to suit especial cases. The right is everlasting right, and the wrong everlasting wrong. If any man nominated for an office in this city, or state, or nation differs from the Decalogue, do not fix up the Decalogue, but fix him up. This law must stand whatever else may fall.

I call your attention also to the fact that you are all aware of, that the breaking of one commandment makes it the more easy to break all of them, and the philosophy is plain. Any kind of sin weakens the conscience, and if the conscience is weakened, that opens the door for all kinds of transgression. If, for instance, a man go into this political campaign wielding scurrility as his chief weapon, and believes everything bad about a man, and believes nothing good, how long before that man himself will get over the moral depression? Neither in time nor eternity. If I utter a falsehood in regard to a man I may damage him, but I get for myself tenfold more damage. That is a gun that kicks. If a man be profane, under provocation he will commit any crime. I say under provocation. For if man will maltreat the Lord Almighty, would he not maltreat his fellowman? If a man be guilty of malfeasance in office he will, under provocation, commit any sin. He who will steal will lie, and he who will lie will steal. If a man be unchaste, he opens the door for all other iniquity, for in that one iniquity he commits theft of the worst kind, and covetousness of the worst kind, and falsehood—pretending to be decent when he is not—and maltreats his parents by disgracing their name, if they were good. Be careful, therefore, how you charge that sin against any man either in high place or low place, either in office or out of office, because when you make that charge against a man you charge him with

all villainies, with all disgusting propensities, with all rottenness. A libertine is a beast lower than the vermin that crawl over a summer carcass—lower than the swine, for the swine has no intelligence to sin against. Be careful, then, how you charge that against any man. You must be so certain that a mathematical demonstration is doubtful as compared with it. Do not chop off the seventh commandment to suit the case. Do not change Fairbanks' scale to suit what you are weighing with it. Do not cut off a yardstick to suit the drygoods you are measuring. Let the law stand, and never tamper with it.

Above all I charge you, do not join in the cry that I have heard—for fifteen, twenty years I have heard it—that there is no such thing as purity. If you make that charge you are a foul-mouthed scandalmonger of the human race. When a man, by pen or type or tongue, utters such a slander on the human race that there is no such thing as purity I know right away that that man himself is a walking lazaretto, a reeking ulcer, and is fit for no society better than that of devils damned. We may enlarge our charities in such a case, but in no such case let us shave off the Ten Commandments. Let them stand as the everlasting defense of society and of the Church of God.

The committing of one sin opens the door for the commission of other sins. You see it every day. Those Wall Street embezzlers, those bank cashiers absconding, as soon as they are brought to justice, develop the fact that they were in all kinds of sin. No exception to the rule: They all kept bad company, they nearly all gambled, they all went to places where they ought not. Why? The commission of the one sin opened the gate for all other sins. Sins go in flocks, in droves, and in herds. You open the door for one sin, that invites all the miserable segregation. Is not the fourth commandment as important as the eighth, as the seventh, as the ninth? Some

of the political campaign orators as I have seen them reported, and as I have heard in regard to them, bombarding the suffering candidates all the week, yet tossing the name of God from their lips recklessly, guilty of profanity. What are they doing with the third commandment? Is not the third commandment which says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain"—is not the third commandment as important as the other nine? Oh, yes, we find in all departments men hurling their indignation against sins perhaps to which they are not especially tempted—hurling it against iniquity toward which they are not particularly drawn.

What right have you or I to select which commandment we will keep and which we will break? Better not try to measure the thunderbolts of the Almighty, saying this has less blaze, this has less momentum. Better not play with the guns, better not experiment much with the divine ammunition. Cicero said he saw the *Iliad* written on a nut shell, and you and I have seen the Lord's prayer written on a five-cent piece; but the whole tendency of these times is to write the Ten Commandments so small nobody can see them. I protest against the attempt to revise the Decalogue which was given on Mount Sinai amid the blast of trumpets and the cracking of the rocks, and the paroxysm of the mountain of Arabia Petræa. Herodotus said that the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar was so fascinated with her beautiful village that she had the river above Babylon changed so it wound this way and wound that, and curved this way and curved that, and though you sailed on it for three days every day you would be in sight of that exquisite village. Now I do not care which way you sail in morals, or which way you sail in life, if you only sail within sight of this beautiful

group of divine commandments. Although they may sometimes seem to be a little angular, I do not care which way you sail; if you sail in sight of them you will never run aground and you will never be shipwrecked.

I never felt more impressed from God than I do at this moment of the importance of what I am saying. Society needs toning up on all these subjects. I tell you there is nothing worse to fight than the ten regiments, with bayonets and sabers of fire, marching down from Mount Sinai. They always gain the victory, and those who fight against them go under. There are thousands and tens of thousands of men being slain by the Decalogue. Let not men and women in this nineteenth century revise the Ten Commandments, but let them in society and at the polls put to the front those who come nearest to this God-lifted standard.

XXXIX

Do Nations Die?

Do nations die? Oh, yes, there is great mortality among monarchies and republics. They are like individuals, in the fact that they are born, they have a middle life, they have a decease; they have a cradle and a grave. Some of them are assassinated, some destroyed by their own hand. Have we a right to conclude that because our republic is alive to-day it will be alive forever? Let me call the roll of some of the dead civilizations and some of the dead cities and let some one answer for them. Egyptian civilization, stand up. "Dead!" answer the ruins of Karnak and Luxor, and from the Nile there comes a chorus crying, "Dead! Dead!" Assyrian Empire, stand up and answer. "Dead!" cry the charred ruins of Nineveh. After six hundred years of magnificent opportunity, dead. Israelitish kingdom, stand up. After two hundred and fifty years of divine interposition, and of miraculous vicissitude, and of heroic behavior, and of appalling depravity, dead. Phœnicia, stand up and answer. After inventing the alphabet, and giving it to the world, and sending out her merchant caravans in one direction to Central Asia, and sending out navigators to the Atlantic Ocean in another direction, dead. Athens, after Phidias, after Demosthenes, after Miltiades, dead. Roman Empire, stand up and answer. Empire once bounded by the British Channel on the north, by the Euphrates on the east, by the Sahara Desert in Africa on the south, by the Atlantic Ocean on the west. Home of three great civilizations, owning all the then discovered world that was worth

owning—Roman Empire, answer. Gibbon, in his *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, says, “Dead!” and the forsaken seats of the ruined Coliseum, and the skeleton of the Aqueducts, and the miasma of the Campagna, and the fragments of the marble baths, and the useless piers of the Bridge Triumphalis, and the Mamartine prison, holding no more apostolic prisoners, and the silent Forum, and Basilica of Constantine, and the Arch of Titus, and the Pantheon come in great chorus, crying: “Dead, dead!” After Horace, after Virgil, after Tacitus, after Cicero, dead. After Horatius on the bridge, and Cincinnatus, the farmer oligarch, after Pompey, after Cassius, after Constantine, after Cæsar, dead. The war eagle of Rome flew so high it was blinded by the sun and came whirling down through the heavens and the owl of desolation and darkness built its nest in the forsaken eyrie. Mexican Empire, dead. French Empire, dead.

You see, my friends, it is no unusual thing for a government to perish and in the same necrology of dead nations and in the same graveyard of expired governments will go the United States of America unless there be some potent voice to call a halt and unless God in his mercy interfere and through a purified ballot-box and a widespread Christian sentiment the catastrophe be averted.

What killed Babylon? What killed Phœnica? What killed Rome? Their own depravity; and the fraud and the drunkenness and the lechery which have destroyed other nations will destroy ours unless a merciful God prevent.

There is enough out-and-out licentiousness in American cities to-day to bring down upon them the wrath of God, who on the 24th of August, 79, buried Herculaneum and Pompeii so deep in ashes that eighteen hundred subsequent years have not been able to complete the exhumation. As the Romans were after the Celts, and as the

Normans were after the Britons, so there are evils after this nation which will attend the obsequies unless we first attend theirs.

Superstition tells of a marine reptile, the Cephaloptera, which enfolded and crushed a ship of war; but it is no superstition when I tell you that the history of many of the dead nations proclaims to us the fact that our ship of state is in danger of being crushed by the Cephaloptera of national depravity. Where is the Hercules to slay this hydra? Is it not time to speak by pen, by tongue, by ballot-box, by the rolling of the prison door, by hangman's halter, by earnest prayer, by Sinaitic detonation? A son of King Cræsus is said to have been dumb and to have never uttered a word until he saw his father being put to death. Then he broke the shackles of silence and cried out: "Kill not my father Cræsus!" When I see the cheater and the wantonness and the manifold crime of this country attempting to commit patricide—yea, matricide—upon our institutions, it seems to me that lips that heretofore have been dumb ought to break the silence with thunderous tones of fiery protest.

I want to put all of the matter before you so that every honest man and woman will know just how matters stand, and what they ought to do if they vote, and what they ought to do if they pray.

This nation is not going to perish. Alexander, when he heard of the wealth of the Indies, divided Macedonia among his soldiers. Some one asked him what he had kept for himself, and he replied: "I am keeping Hope." And that jewel I keep bright and shining in my soul, whatever else I shall surrender. "Hope, thou, in God." He will set back these oceanic tides of moral devastation.

Do you know what is the prize for which contention is made to-day? It is the prize of this continent. What a jewel it is—a jewel carved in relief, the cameo of this

planet! On one side of us the Atlantic Ocean, dividing us from the worn-out governments of Europe. On the other side the Pacific Ocean, dividing us from the superstitions of Asia. On the north of us the Arctic Sea, which is the gymnasium in which the explorers and navigators develop their courage. A continent ten thousand five hundred miles long, seventeen millions of population on this continent of North and South America—one hundred millions and room for many hundred millions more. All flora and all fauna, all metals and all precious woods, and all grains and all fruits. The Appalachian range the backbone, and the rivers the ganglis, carrying life all through and out to the extremities. Isthmus of Darian the narrow waist of a giant continent, all to be under one government, and all free and Christian, and the scene of Christ's personal reign on earth if according to the expectation of many good people he shall at last set up his throne in this world. Who shall have this hemisphere—Christ or Satan? Who shall have the shore of her inland seas, the silver of her Nevadas, the gold of her Colorados, the telescopes of the observatories, the brain of her universities, the wheat of her prairies, the rice of her Savannas, the two great ocean beaches—the one reaching from Baffin's Bay to Tierra del Fuego, and the other from Behring's Straits to Cape Horn—and all the moral and temporal and spiritual and everlasting interests of population vast beyond all computation saved by him with whom a thousand years are as one day? Who shall have the hemisphere? You and I will decide that or help to decide it by conscientious vote, by earnest prayer, by maintenance of Christian institutions, by support of great philanthropies, by putting body, mind, and soul on the right side of all moral, religious, and national movements.

It will not be long before it will not make any differ-

ence to you or to me what becomes of this continent, so far as earthly comfort is concerned. All we want of it will be seven feet by three, and that will take in the largest, and there will be room and to spare. That is all of this country we will need, very soon, the youngest of us. But we have an anxiety about the welfare and the happiness of the generations that are coming on, and it will be a grand thing if when the archangel's trumpet sounds we find that our sepulcher, like the one Joseph of Arimathea provided for Christ, is in the midst of a garden. By that time this country will be all Paradise, or all Dry Tortugas. Eternal God, to thee we commit the destiny of this people!

XL

The Lamé Take the Prey

We have in the thirty-third chapter of Isaiah a command given, or rather implied, that the "lame take the prey." It also, and more directly perhaps, predicts the utter demolition of the Assyrian host. Not only robust men should go forth and gather the spoils of conquest, but even men crippled of arm and crippled of foot should go out and capture much that was valuable. Their physical disadvantages should not hinder their enrichment. So it has been in the past, so it is now, so it will be in the future. So it is in all departments. Men labor under seeming great disadvantages, and amid the most unfavorable circumstances, yet making grand achievements, getting great blessing for themselves, great blessing for the world, great blessing for the Church, and so "the lame take the prey."

The three greatest poets of the world were totally blind: Homer, Ossian, John Milton. Mr. Pearson, who wrote that enchanting book, *The Conquest of Mexico*, never saw Mexico, could not even see the paper on which he was writing. A framework across the sheet, between which, up and down, went the pen immortal. Do you know that Alexander Pope, whose poems will last as long as the English language, was so much an invalid that he had to be sewed up every morning in rough canvas in order to stand on his feet at all?

Do you know that Stuart, the celebrated painter, did much of his wonderful work under the shadow of the dungeon, where he had been unjustly imprisoned for

debt? Do you know that Demosthenes by almost superhuman exertion first had to conquer the lisp of his own speech before he conquered assemblages with his eloquence, and that many of the great poets and painters and orators and historians and heroes of the world had something to keep them back, and pull them down, and to impede their way and cripple their physical or intellectual movement, and yet they pushed on and pushed up until they reached the spoils of worldly success, and amid the huzza of the nations and centuries "the lame took the prey?"

You know the vast multitude of these men started under the disadvantage of obscure parentage. Columbus, the son of the weaver. Ferguson, the astronomer, the son of the shepherd. America the prey of one; worlds on worlds the prey of the other. But what is true in secular direction is more true in spiritual and religious direction.

In the great work of assuaging human suffering and enlightening human ignorance, and halting human iniquity, the chief part is done by ordinary men, with ordinary speech, and ordinary manner, and by ordinary means. The trouble is that in the army of Christ we all want to be captains and colonels and brigadier-generals. We are not willing to march with the rank and file and do duty with the private soldier. We want to belong to the reserve corps, and read about the battle while warming ourselves at the camp-fires, or on furlough at home, sagging back into an armchair.

There are in all communities many invalids. They never knew a well day. They adhere to their occupations, but they go panting along the streets with exhaustion, and at eventide they lie down on the lounge with aching beyond medications. They have tried all prescriptions; they have gone through all the cures which

were proclaimed infallible, and they have come now to surrender to perpetual ailments. They consider they are among many disadvantages, and when they see those who are bouyant in health pass by they almost envy their robust frames and easy respiration.

But I have noticed among that invalid class those who have the greatest knowledge of the Bible, who have had the most remarkable answers to prayer, and who have the most exhilarant anticipation of heaven. The temptations which weary us who are in robust health they have conquered. They have divided among them the spoil of the conquest. They are the lame that take the prey.

XLI

The Bare Arm of God

It almost takes our breath away to read some of the Bible imagery. There is such boldness of metaphor in my text that I have been for some time getting my courage up to preach from it. Isaiah, the evangelistic prophet, is sounding the jubilate of our planet redeemed, and cries out, "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm." What overwhelming suggestiveness in that figure of speech, "The bare arm of God!" The people of Palestine to this day wear much hindering apparel, and when they want to run a special race or lift a special burden or fight a special battle they put off the outside apparel as in our land when a man proposes a special exertion he puts off his coat and rolls up his sleeves. Walk through our founderies, our machine shops, our mines, our factories, and you will find that most of the toilers have their coats off and their sleeves rolled up.

Isaiah saw that there must be a tremendous amount of work done before this world becomes what it ought to be, and he foresees it all accomplished, and accomplished by the Almighty; not as we ordinarily think of him, but by the Almighty with the sleeve of his robe rolled back to his shoulder: "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm." Nothing more impresses me in the Bible than the ease with which God does most things. There is such reserve power.

You know that many of the most elaborate and expensive industries of our world have been employed in creating artificial light. But see how easily God made

the light. He did not make bare his arm; he did not even put forth his robed arm; he did not lift so much as a finger. The flint out of which he struck the noonday sun was the word "light." "Let there be light!" Out of a word came light, to be concentrated in the blazing sun, the father of flowers and warmth. Out of a word, building a fireplace for all the nations of earth to warm themselves by!

A Scottish clergyman once told me of dyspeptic Thomas Carlyle walking out with a friend one starry night, and as the friend looked up and said: "What a splendid sky!" Mr. Carlyle replied, as he glanced upward: "Sad sight, sad sight!" Not so thought David as he read the great Scripture of the night heavens. It was a sweep of embroidery, of vast tapestry, God-manipulated. That is the allusion of the Psalmist to the woven hangings of tapestry as they were known long before David's time. So David says of the heavens, that God's fingers wove into them the light; that God's fingers tapestried them with the stars; that God's fingers embroidered them with stars; that God's fingers embroidered them with worlds.

Now I ask for the benefit of all disheartened Christian workers, if God accomplished so much with his fingers, what can he not do when he puts out all his strength and when he unlimbers all the batteries of his omnipotence? The Bible speaks again and again of God's outstretched arm; but only once, and that in the text, of the bare arm of God.

My text makes it plain that the rectification of this world is a tremendous undertaking. It takes more power to make this world over again than it took to make it at the first. A word was only necessary for the first creation, but for the new creation the unsleeved and unhindered forearm of the Almighty! The reason of that I can understand. In the ship yards of Liverpool or Glas-

gow or New York a great vessel is constructed. The architect draws out the plan, the length of the beam, the capacity of tonnage, the rotation of wheel or screw, the cabins, the masts, and all appointments of this great palace of the deep. The architect finishes his work without any perplexity, and the carpenters and the artisans toil on the craft so many hours a day, each one doing his part, until with flags flying and thousands of people huzzaing on the docks the vessel is launched. But out on the sea that steamer breaks her shaft and is limping slowly along towards the harbor, when Caribbean whirlwinds—those mighty hunters of the deep, looking out for prey of ships—surround that wounded vessel and pitch it on a rocky coast, and she lifts and falls in the breakers until every joint is loose and every spar is down and every wave sweeps over the hurricane deck as she parts midships. Would it not require more power and skill to get that splintered vessel off the rocks and reconstruct her than it required originally to build her? Aye! Our world that God built so beautiful and which started out with all the flags of Edenic foliage and with the chart of paradisaical bowers, had been sixty centuries pounding in the skerries of sin and sorrow, and to get her off and to get her on the right way again will require more of omnipotence than it required to build her and launch her. So I am not surprised that though in the dry-dock of one word our world was made, it will take the unsleeved arm of God to lift her from the rocks and put her on the right course again. It is evident from my text, and its comparison with other texts, that it would not be so great an undertaking to make a whole constellation of worlds and a whole galaxy of worlds and a whole astronomy of worlds, and swing them in their orbits, as to take this wounded world, this stranded world, this bankrupt world, this destroyed world, and make it as good as when it

started. Now just look at the enthroned difficulties in the way, the removal or overthrow of which seems to require the bare right arm of Omnipotence. There stands heathenism with its eight hundred and sixty million victims. There, too, stands Mohammedanism, with its one hundred and seventy-six million victims. There stands also the Archdemon of Alcoholism. Its throne is white and made of bleached human skulls. On one side of that throne of skulls kneels in obeisance and worship, Democracy, and on the other side Republicanism; and the one that oftenest kisses the cancerous and gangrened foot of this despot gets the most benedictions. There is a Hudson river and Ohio, a Mississippi of strong drink rolling through this nation; but as the rivers from which I take my figure of speech empty into the Atlantic or the Gulf this mightier flood of sickness and insanity and domestic ruin and crime and bankruptcy and woe empties into the hearts and homes and the churches and the time and the eternity of a multitude beyond all statistics to number or describe. All nations are mauled and scarified with baleful stimulus, or killing narcotic. While the bare arm of suffering, and the bare arm of invalidism, and the bare arm of poverty, and the bare arm of domestic desolation, from which Rum has torn the sleeve are lifted up in beggary and supplication and despair, let the bare arm of God strike.

But I have no time to specify the manifold evils that antagonize Christianity. And I think I have seen in some Christians and read in some newspapers and heard in some pulpits a disheartenment as though Christianity were so worsted that it is hardly worth while to attempt to win this world for God, and that all Christian work would collapse, as Satan is gaining ground. To rebuke that pessimism, the Gospel of Smash-up, I preach this sermon, showing that you are on the winning side. Go ahead!

Fight on! What I want to demonstrate is that our ammunition is not exhausted; that all which has been accomplished has been only the skirmishing before the great Armageddon; that not more than one brigade of the innumerable hosts to be marshaled by the Rider on the White Horse has yet taken the field; what God has done yet, has been with arm folded in flowing robe; the time is coming when he will rise from his throne and throw off the robe and come out of the palaces of eternity and come down the stairs of heaven with all-conquering step and halt in the presence of expectant nations and, flashing his omniscient eyes across the work to be done, will put back the sleeve of his right arm to the shoulder and roll it up and, for the world's final and complete rescue, make bare his arm. Who can doubt the result when, according to my text, Jehovah does his utmost; when the last reserve force of Omnipotence takes the field; when the last sword of Eternal Might leaps from its scabbard?

Cornhusking Time

How vividly to all those of us who were born in the country comes the remembrance of the old-fashioned husking time! We waited for it as for a gala day in the year. It was called a frolic. The trees having for the most part shed their foliage, the farmers waded through the fallen leaves and through the keen morning air to the gleeful company. The frosts which had silvered everything during the night began to melt off the tops of the corn shocks. While the farmers were waiting for others, they stood blowing their breath through their fingers, or threshing their arms around their body to keep up warmth of circulation. Roaring mirth greeted the late farmer as he crawled over the fence. Joke and repartee and rustic salutation abounded. All ready, now! The men take hold the shock of corn and hurl it prostrate, while the moles and mice which have secreted themselves there for warmth attempt to escape. The withe of straw is unwound from the corn shock and the stalks, heavy with the wealth of grain, are rolled into two bundles between which the husker sits down. The husking peg is thrust in until it strikes the corn, and then the fingers rip off the sheathing of the ear, and there is a crack as the root of the corn is snapped off from the husk and the grain, disimprisoned, is hurled up into the sunlight.

The air is tonic, the work is so very exhilarating, the company is so blithe, that some laugh, and some shout, and some sing, and some banter, and some tease a neighbor for a romantic ride along the edge of the woods in eventide, in a carriage that holds but two, and some

prophesy as to the number of bushels in the field, and others go into competition as to which shall rifle the most corn shocks before sundown.

After a while the dinner horn sounds from the farmhouse, and the table is surrounded by a group of jolly and hungry men. From all the pantries, and the cellars, and the perches of fowl on the place, the richest dainties come, and there is carnival and neighborhood reunion. The scene fills our memory part with smiles but more with tears, as we remember that the farm now belongs to other owners, and other hands gather in the fields, and many of those who mingled in that merry husking scene have themselves been reaped "like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

There may come some practical and useful and comforting lessons to all our souls while we think of coming in at last "like a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

It is high time that the King of Terrors were thrown out of the Christian Vocabulary. A vast multitude of people talk of death as though it were the disaster of disasters instead of being to a good man the blessing of blessings. It is moving out of a cold vestibule into a warm temple. It is a change from bleak March to roseate June. It is the transmuting of the iron handcuffs of earthly incarceration into the diamonded wristlets of a bridal party; or it is only husking time. It is the tearing off of the rough sheath of the body that the bright and beautiful soul may go free. Coming in "like a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

We all know that husking time is a time of frost. Frost on the fence. Frost on the stubble. Frost on the ground. Frost on the bare branches of the trees. Frost in the air. Frost on the hands of the huskers. You remember we used to hide behind the cornstacks so as to keep off the wind, but still you remember how shivering

was the body and how painful was the cheek, and how benumbed were the hands; but after a while the sun was high up, and all the frost went out of the air, and hilarities awakened the echoes, and joy from one corn shock went up, and was answered by joy from another corn shock. So we all realize that the death of our friends is the nipping of many expectations, the freezing, the chilling, the frosting of many of our hopes. It is far from being a south wind. It comes from out of the frigid north and when they go away from us we stand benumbed in mind and benumbed in soul. We stand among our dead neighbors, our dead families, and we say "Will we ever get over it?" Yes, we will get over it amid the shouting of heavenly reunion, and we will look back to all these distresses of husking time. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." The chill of the frosts, followed by gladness that cometh in "like a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

Of course the husking time made rough work with the ear of corn. The husking peg had to be thrust in and the hard thumb of the husker had to come down on the swathing of the ear, and then there was a pull and there was a ruthless tearing, then a complete snapping off before the corn was freed, and if the husk could have spoken it would have said: "Why do you so lacerate me? Why do you wrench me?" Ah, my friends, that is the way God has arranged that the ear and the husk shall part, and that is the way he has arranged that the body and the soul shall separate. You can afford to have your physical distresses when you know that they are only forwarding the soul's liberation. There is gold in you that must come out. You must let the Heavenly Husbandman husk off the mortality from the immortality.

There ought to be great consolation in this for all who have chonic ailments, since the Lord is gradually and

more mildly taking away from you that which hinders your soul's liberation, doing gradually for you what for many of us in robust health perhaps he will do in one fell blow at the last.

You remember also that in the time of husking it was a neighborhood reunion. By the great fireplace, in the winter, the fires roaring around the glorified back logs on an old-fashioned hearth, of which the modern stoves and registers are only the degenerate descendants, the farmers used to gather and spend the evening, and there would be much sociality; but it was not anything like the joy of the husking time, for then all the farmers came, and they came in the best of humor, and they came from beyond the meadow, and they came from regions two and three miles around. There was recital of the brightest experiences in all their lives, and there was a neighborhood reunion, the memory of which makes all the nerves of my body tremble with emotion as the strings of a harp when the fingers of the player have swept the chords. The husking time of neighborhood reunion, and so heaven will be just that. There they come up! They slept in the old village churchyard. There they come up! They reclined amid the fountains and the sculpture and the parterres of a city cemetery. There they come up. They went down when the ship foundered off Cape Hatteras. They come up from all sides—from Potter's Field and out of solid masonry of Westminster Abbey. They come up. They come up! All the hindrances to their better nature husked off. All their spiritual despondencies husked off. All their hindrances to usefulness husked off. The golden grain, the God-fashioned grain visible and conspicuous. Some of them on earth were such disagreeable Christians you could hardly stand it in their presence. Now in heaven they are so radiant you hardly know them. The fact is, all

their imperfections have been husked off. They did not mean on earth to be disagreeable. They meant well enough, but they told you how sick you looked, and they told you how many hard things they had heard about you, and they told you how often they had to stand up for you in some battles until you wished almost that they had been slain in some of the battles. Good, pious, concentrated, well-meaning disagreeables. Now in heaven all their offensiveness has been husked off. Each one as happy as he can be. Heaven one great neighborhood reunion. All kings and queens, all songsters, all millionaires, all banqueters. God, the father, with his children all around him. Stand at the gate of the granary and see the grain come in, out of the frosts into the sunshine, out of the darkness into the light, out of the tearing and the ripping and the twisting and the wrenching and the lacerating and the husking time of earth unto the wide-open door of the King's granary, "like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

I do not know how you are constituted, but I am so constituted that there is nothing that so awakens reminiscences in me as the odor of a cornfield, when I cross it after the corn has been cut and it stands in shocks; and so I have thought it might be practically useful for us to cross the cornfield, and I have thought perhaps there might be some reminiscence roused in our soul that might be salutary and might be saving. Would that some memory rolling up from your childhood out of the cornfields—the song of the huskers, twenty or forty years ago, might turn all our feet out of the paths of sin into the paths of righteousness. Would God that those memories, wafted in on odor or song, might start us this moment with swift feet toward that blessed place where so many of our loved ones have already preceded us "as a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

XLIII

The Field of Blood

The money that Judas gave for surrendering Christ was used to purchase a graveyard. As the money was blood-money the ground bought by it was called in the Syriac tongue, Aceldama, meaning "The field of blood." Well, there is one word I want to write to-day over every race-course where wagers are staked, and every pool-room, and every gambling place, and every table, public or private, where men and women play for sums of money, large or small, and that is a word incarnadined with the lives of innumerable victims—Aceldama. The gambling spirit, which is at all times a stupendous evil, ever and anon sweeps over the country like an epidemic, prostrating uncounted thousands. There has never been a worse attack than that from which all the villages, towns and cities are now suffering.

Gambling is the risking of something more or less valuable in the hope of winning more than you hazard. The instruments of gaming may differ, but the principle is the same. The shuffling and dealing of cards, however full of temptation, is not gambling unless stakes are put up; while on the other hand, gambling may be carried on without cards, or dice, or billiards. The man who bets on horses, on elections, on battles, the man who deals in "fancy" stocks or goes into transactions without foundation but dependent upon what men call "luck" is a gambler. Whatever you expect to get from your neighbor without offering an equivalent in money, or time, or skill is either the product of theft or gaming. Do not there-

fore associate gambling necessarily with any instrument, or game, or place, or think the principle depends upon whether you play for a glass of wine or one hundred shares of railroad stock.

This is no new-born sprite, but a haggard transgression that comes staggering down under a mantle of curses through many centuries. All nations, barbarous and civilized, have been addicted to it. Before 1838 the French government received revenue from it. In 1567 England, for the improvement of her harbors, instituted a lottery to be held at the front door of St. Paul's Cathedral. But now the laws of the whole civilized world denounce the system. Enactments have been passed, but only partially enforced, and at times not enforced at all. Says a traveler through the West: "I have traveled a thousand miles at a time upon the Western waters and have seen gambling at every waking moment from the commencement to the termination of the journey." Men wishing to gamble will find places just suited to their capacity, not only in the underground oyster-cellar, or at the table back of the curtain, covered with greasy cards, or in the steamboat smoking cabin, where the bloated wretch with rings in his ears deals out his pack, and winks at the unsuspecting traveler—providing free drinks all around—but in gilded parlors and amid gorgeous surroundings.

This sin works ruin, first by providing an unhealthful stimulant. Excitement is pleasurable. Under every sky and in every age men have sought it. The Chinaman gets it by smoking his opium; the Persian by chewing hasheesh; the trapper in a buffalo hunt; the sailor in a squall; the inebriate in the bottle, and the avaricious at the gaming table. We must at times have excitement. A thousand voices in our nature demand it. It is right. It is healthful. It is inspiriting. It is God-given. But

anything that gratifies this appetite by means which hurl it back in a terrific reaction is deplorable and wicked. God never made a man strong enough to endure the wear and tear of gambling excitement.

The gambler may be eaten up by the gambler's passion, yet you only discover it by the greed in his eyes, the hardness of his features, the nervous restlessness, and his embarrassed business. Yet he is on the road to hell, and no preacher's voice, or startling warning, or wife's entreaty, can make him stay for a moment his headlong career. The infernal spell is on him; a giant is aroused within; and though you bind him with cables, they would part like thread, and though you fasten him seven times round with chains, they would snap like a rusted wire; and though you piled up in his path heaven-high Bibles, tracts, and sermons, and on the top should set the Cross of the Son of God, over them all the gambler would leap like a roe over the rocks on his way to perdition. "Aceldama, the field of blood."

This sin works ruin by killing industry. A man used to reaping scores or hundreds of dollars from the gaming table will not be content with slow work. This sin has dulled the carpenter's saw, sunk the cargo, sent a strange lightning to shatter the battery of the philosopher.

The modern habit of gambling about everything is productive of immense mischief. The most healthful and innocent amusements of yachting and baseball playing have been the occasion of putting up extravagant wages. That which to many has been advantageous to body and mind has been to others the means of financial and moral loss. The custom is pernicious in the extreme, where scores of men in respectable life give themselves up to betting now on this boat, now on that; now on this ball club, now on that. Betting, that was once chiefly the accompaniment of the race-course, is fast becoming a

national habit, and in some circles, an opinion advanced on finance or politics is accosted with the interrogation: "How much will you bet on that?"

This custom may make no appeal to slow, lethargic temperaments, but there are in the country tens of thousands of quick, nervous, sanguine, excitable temperaments, ready to be acted upon, and their feet will soon take hold on death. For some months, and perhaps for years, they will linger in the more polite and elegant circle of gamblers, but after a while their pathway will come to the fatal plunge.

Take warning! You are no stronger than tens of thousands who have by this practice been overthrown. No young man in our cities can escape being tempted. Beware of the first beginnings! This road is a down grade, and every instant increases the momentum. Launch not upon this treacherous sea. Splintered hulks strew the beach. Everlasting storms howl up and down, tossing unwary crafts into Hell Gate. I speak of what I have seen with my own eyes. To a gambler's death-bed there comes no hope. He will probably die alone. His former associates come not nigh his dwelling. When his last hour comes, his miserable soul will go out of a miserable life into a miserable eternity. Let him down now into his grave. Plant no tree to cast its shade there, for the long, deep, eternal gloom that settles there is shadow enough. Visit it not in the sunshine, for that would be mockery, but in the dismal night, when no stars are out, and the spirits of darkness come down horsed on the wind, then visit the grave of the gambler.

XLIV

Eventide

Two villagers, having concluded their errand in Jerusalem, have started out at the city gate and are on their way to Emmaus, the place of their residence. They go with a sad heart. Jesus, who had been their admiration and their joy, had been basely massacred and entombed. As with sad face and broken heart they pass on their way, a stranger accosts them. They tell him their anxieties and bitterness of soul. He in turn talks to them, expounding the Scriptures. They forget the time and notice not the objects they pass, and before they are aware have come up in front of their house. They pause before the entrance and attempt to persuade the stranger to tarry with them. They press upon him their hospitalities. Night is coming on, and he may meet prowling wild beast, or be obliged to lie unsheltered from the dew. He cannot go much farther now. They take him by the arm and they insist upon his coming in, addressing him in the words: "Abide with us, for it is towards evening." The lamps are lighted, the table is spread, pleasant socialities are enkindled. They rejoice in the presence of the stranger guest. He asks a blessing upon the bread they eat, and he hands a piece to each. Suddenly and with overwhelming power the thought flashes upon the astounded people—it is the Lord! And as they sit in breathless wonder looking upon the resurrected body of Jesus he vanished. The interview ended. He was gone.

With many of us it is a bright sunshiny day of prosperity. There is not a cloud in the sky, not a leaf

rustling in the forest. No chill in the air. But we cannot expect all this to last. He is not an intelligent man who expects perpetual daylight of joy. The sun will after a while near the horizon. The shadows will lengthen. While I speak many of us stand in the hour described—"For it is towards evening." The great want of all such is to have Jesus abide with them. It is a dismal thing to be getting old without the rejuvenating influence of religion. When we stop on the down-grade of life and see that it dips to the verge of the cold river, we want to behold some one near who will help us across it. When the sight loses its power to glance and gather up, we need the faith that can illumine. When we feel the failure of the ear, we need the clear tones of that voice which in olden times broke up the silence of the deaf with cadences of mercy. When the ax-men of death hew down whole forests of strength and beauty around us and we are left in solitude we need the dove of divine mercy to sing in our branches. When the shadows begin to fall and we feel that the day is far spent, we need most of all to suppliant the beneficent Jesus in the prayer of the villagers, "Abide with us, for it is towards evening."

The request is an appropriate exclamation for all those who are approaching the gloomy hour of temptation. There is nothing easier than to be good-natured when everything pleases, or to be humble when there is nothing to puff us up, or forgiving when we have not been assailed, or honest when we have no inducement to fraud. But you have felt the grapple of some temptation. Your nature at some time quaked and groaned under the infernal force. You felt the devil was after you. You saw your Christian graces retreating. You feared that you would fail in the awful wrestle with sin and be thrown into the dust. The gloom thickened. The first indications of the night were seen. In all the trembling of your

soul, in all the infernal suggestions of Satan, in all the surging up of tumultuous passions and excitements you felt with awful emphasis that it was toward evening. In the tempted hour you need to ask Jesus to abide with you. Then you can beat back the monster that would devour. You can unhorse the sin that would ride you down. You can sharpen the battle-ax with which you split the head of helmeted abomination. Who helped Paul shake the brazen-gated heart of Felix? Who acted like a good sailor when all the crew howled in the Mediterranean shipwreck? Who helped the martyrs to be firm, when one word of recantation would have unfastened the withes at the stake and put out the kindling fire? When the night of the soul came on and all the denizens of darkness came riding upon the winds of perdition—who gave strength to the soul? Who gave calmness to the heart? Who broke the spell of infernal enchantment? He who heard the request of the villagers: "Abide with us, for it is towards evening." One of the forts of France was attacked and the outworks were taken before night. The besieging army lay down, thinking that there was but little to do in the morning and that the soldiery in the fort could be easily made to surrender. But during the night through a backstairs they escaped into the country. In the morning the besieging army sprang upon the battlements, but found their prey had gone. So when we are assaulted by temptation, there is always some secret stair by which we might get off. God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able, but with every temptation will bring a way of escape that we may be able to bear it.

The prayer is appropriate for all who are anticipating sorrow. The greatest folly that ever grew on this planet is the tendency to borrow trouble. But there are times when approaching sorrow is so evident that we need to

be making special preparation for its coming. Night speeds on. The heart feels with mournful anticipation that the sun is going down. You sit quiet. You feel heavy-hearted. The light is fading from the sky, the air is chill. It is toward evening.

You had a considerable estate and felt independent. In five minutes on one fair balance sheet you could see just how you stood with the world. But there came complications; something that you imagined impossible happened. The best friend you had proved traitor to your interests. A sudden crash of national misfortune prostrated your credit. You may to-day be going on in business, but you feel anxious about where you are standing, and fear that the next turn of the commercial wheel will bring you prostrate. The misfortunes of life have accumulated. You wonder what makes the sky so dark. It is toward evening.

Trouble is an apothecary that mixes a great many draughts, bitter and sour and nauseous, and you must drink some of them. Trouble puts up a great many packs, and you must carry some of them. There is no sandal so thick and well adjusted but some thorn will strike through it. There is no sound so sweet but the undertaker's screwdriver grates through it. In this swift shuttle of the heart some of the threads must break. The journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus will soon be ended. Our Bible, our common sense, our observation, reiterate in tones that we cannot mistake and ought not to disregard—it is toward evening.

Oh, then, for Jesus to abide with us! He sweetens the cup. He extracts the thorn. He wipes the tear. He hushes the tempest. He soothes the soul that flies to him for shelter. Let the night swoop and the Euroclydon toss the sea. Let the thunders roll—soon all will be well. Christ in the ship to soothe his friends. Christ on the sea

to stop its tumult. Christ in the grave to scatter the darkness. Christ in the heavens to lead the way. Blessed all such. His arms will enclose them, his grace comfort them, his light cheer them, his sacrifice free them, his glory enchant them. If earthly estate take wings he will be an incorruptible treasure. If friends die he will be their resurrection. Standing with us in the morning of our joy and in the noonday of our prosperity, he will not forsake us when the luster has faded and it is toward evening.

Listen to Paul's battle-shout with misfortune. Hark to mounting Latimer's fire song. Look at the glory that hath reft the dungeon and filled the earth and heavens with the crash of the falling manacles of despotism. And then look at those who have tried to cure themselves by human prescriptions, attempting to heal gangrene with a patch of court plaster, and to stop the plague of dying empires with quackery of earthly wisdom. Nothing can speak peace to the soul, nothing can unstrap our crushing burdens, nothing can overcome our spiritual foes, nothing can open our eyes to see the surrounding horses and chariots of salvation that fill all the mountains, but the voice and command of him, who stopped one night at Emmaus.

The words are pertinent to us all, from the fact that we are nearing the evening of death. I have heard it said that we ought to live as though each moment were to be our last. I do not believe that theory. As far as preparation is concerned, we ought always to be ready; but we cannot always be thinking of death, for we have duties in life that demand our attention. This ought not to be a depressing theme. Who wants to live forever? The world has always treated me well, and every day I feel less and less like scolding and complaining. Yet I would not want to make this my eternal residence. I love to

watch the clouds and to bathe my soul in the blue sea of heaven; but I expect, when the firmament is rolled away as a scroll, to see a new heaven, grander, higher and more glorious. You ought to be willing to exchange your body that has headaches and side aches and weaknesses innumerable, that limps with the stone-bruise or festers with the thorn or flames on the funeral pyre of fevers, for an incorruptible body and an eye that blinks not before the jasper gates and the great white throne. But between that and this there is an hour about which no man should be reckless or foolhardy. I doubt not your courage, but I tell you that you will want something better than a strong arm, a good aim and a trusty sword when you come to your last battle. You will need a better robe than any you have in your wardrobe to keep you warm in that place. Circumstances do not make so much difference. It may be a bright day when you push off from the planet or it may be a dark night, and while the owl is hooting in the forest. It may be spring, and your soul may go out among the blossoms, apple orchards swinging their censers in the way. It may be winter and the earth in a snow shroud. It may be autumn and the forests set on fire by the retreating year; dead nature laid out in state. It may be with your wife's hand in your hand, or it may be in a strange hotel with a servant faithful to the last. It may be in the rail-train, shot off the switch and tumbling in long reverberation down the embankment—crash—crash. I know not the time; I know not the mode; but the days of our life are being subtracted away, and we shall come down to the time when we have but ten days left, then nine days, then eight days, then seven days, six days, five days, four days, three days, two days, one day. Then hours: three hours, two hours, one hour. Then only minutes left: five minutes, four minutes, three minutes, two minutes, one

minute. Then only seconds left: four seconds, three seconds, two seconds, one second. Gone! The chapter of life ended! The book closed! The pulses at rest! The feet through with the journey! The hands closed from all work. No word on the lips. No breath in the nostrils. Hair combed to lie undisheveled by any human hands. The muscles still. The nerves still. The lungs still. The tongue still. All still. You might put a stethoscope to breast and hear no sound. You might put a speaking trumpet to the ear but you could not wake the deafness. No motion. No throb. No life. Still! Still.

On earth, with many of you the evening is the happiest part of the twenty-four hours. You talk and laugh and sing. You recount the day. You plan for the morrow. You have games and repartees. Amid all the toil of the day, that is the goal for which you run, and as you take out your watch or look at the descending sun you thrill with the thought that it is toward evening. So death comes to the disciple! What if the sun of life is about to set? Jesus is the day-spring from on high; the perpetual morning of every ransomed spirit. What if the darkness comes? Jesus is the light of the world and heaven. What though this earthly house does crumble? Jesus has prepared a house of many mansions. Jesus is the anchor that always holds. Jesus is the light that is never eclipsed. Jesus is the fountain that is never exhausted. Jesus is the evening star, hung up amid the gloom of the gathering night. The troubles of earth will end in the felicities of heaven! Toward evening! The bereavements of earth will soon be lifted. You will not much longer stand pouring your grief in the tomb like Rachel weeping for her children or David mourning for Absalom. Broken hearts bound up. Wounds healed. Tears wiped away. Sorrows terminated! No more sounding of the death march! Toward

evening. Death will come, sweet as slumber to the eyelids of the babe, as full rations to a starving soldier, as evening hour to the exhausted workman. The sky will take on its sunset glow, every cloud a fire-psalm, every lake a glassy mirror; the forests transfigured; delicate mists climbing the air. Your friends will announce it; your pulses will beat it; your joys will ring it; your lips will whisper it: "Toward evening."

XLV

The Bird Anthem

Spring

Christ was in full sympathy with the natural world. He pressed a lily in one of his sermons. You hear the echo of a bird's voice in one of his paragraphs. After a hot day in Jerusalem he went out to spend the evening at a merchant's country seat that he might be surrounded by beautiful natural objects. The book of nature is as certainly inspired as the book of Revelation. For years I have wanted to preach a sermon on the springtime, but it is so difficult to tell just when the spring begins and when the spring closes, and sometimes when I have desired to speak upon this subject I have awakened on Sabbath morning and found the ground covered with the frosts, and then I have adjourned and adjourned the theme. This springtime I have seen Louisiana and Canada—the one covered with roses and in the other I was struck with the hailstorm. But the almanac says that two-thirds of the season have already gone. And when shall we celebrate the fact that “the time of the singing of birds is come?”

The wise men of the East brought to the feet of Christ frankincense and cassia, and shall we not throw down at his feet all the bloom and the redolence of orchard and garden? In New Testament times Christ is represented as stooping down and with his finger writing on the ground, and they marveled at it. Christ is still doing the same thing, and in the verdure of the mountain and

the valley and the springtime flowers and the sweet shrubs, Christ the Lord is still stooping down and with his finger writing on the ground. There is gladness on all sides that spring has arrived. Rejoice! "The time of the singing of birds is come."

Again and again has the season been defeated. Marching up the mountainside ever and anon hurled back and driven down the rocks, but climbing up again until it will plant its green standards on the topmost cliff, led on by bands of music in the treetops, for "the time of the singing of birds is come." Now, let the plowmen sharpen their coulters and charge on the tough glebe, and the harrows with iron teeth chew up the clods, and the waters clap their hands with gladness, and the trees put bridal blossoms in their hair, and the ponds with multitudinous life make the bogs quake, for "the time of the singing of birds is come."

Learn first from this season, the goodness of your God. Do you realize the mercy of the Lord in the dominant color of springtime? He touches the eye with the color halfway between the blue and the red, the green in which is so kindly and lovingly mingled the mercy and goodness of our God.

As sea monsters struck by harpoon swim quickly away at sea, so the winter storm-cloud struck by lances of light swims off the sky. The trees at this moment are pulling on their sleeves of foliage and the roots their boots of sod. Buds burst like harmless bombshells, scattering aroma on the fields. Joy of fishes in the water, joy of insects in the air, joy of cattle in the fields, joy of wings in the sky for "the time of the singing of birds is come." Gracious and blessed God, all the sunshine thou hast shaken from thy robe, all the verdure, is only the track of thy feet, all the music is struck from thy harp.

At early sunrise nature goes to morning prayers, read-

ing the 148th Psalm: "Praise the Lord! Mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars." Fowl in the yard. Flocks on the hill. Insects drinking dew from cups of hyacinth. Jasmine climbing over the stone wall. Martins coming back to build their nest in the rafters of the barn, or becoming harmless eavesdroppers at our roof. All the natural world accordant and filled with the praises of God. Have you praised him? The winds thank him, humming among the tree branches. The birds thank him, and for the drop they dip from the brook fill all the day with a roundelay. The honeysuckles praise him burning incense of fragrance before the throne. The oceans praise him with open diapason of tempest. Is your voice silent? Is this the snapped harp string? Is the human heart the only broken instrument in the orchestration of earth and sky and sea? Are we the only discord in the grand oratorio of the eternities?

Again the season of bird anthem suggests to me the wisdom of our God. Dr. Paley, the Christian philosopher, wrote a very brilliant chapter about the wonders of a bird's wing. Musicians have listened in the woods and they have written down in their portfolio in musical score the song of the birds—the libretto of the forests. Oh, the wisdom of God in the structure of a bird's wing! Oh, the wisdom of God in the structure of a bird's voice! Could all the artists and artisans and philosophers of the earth make one dandelion? In one cup of China-aster enough wine of wisdom for all nations to drink. Where is the architect that could plan the pillar of one pond lily? Let them look at a vegetable and tell the story how it has lungs and how it has feet and how it has an ancestry as old as the ages, and how it will have descendants as long as time, and how that in one square inch it has three thousand cells, each one of which requires the omnipotence of a God.

Galileo in prison for his advanced notions of nature was asked why he persisted in believing in God, and he pointed down to a broken straw on the floor of his dungeon and said: "Sirs, if I had no other reason to believe the wisdom and the goodness of God, I would argue them from that straw on the floor of this dungeon." Behold the wisdom and the goodness of God in the construction of the seeds from which all the growths of this springtime come forth, seeds so wonderfully constructed that they keep their vitality for hundreds and thousands of years. Grains of corn found in the cerements of the Egyptian mummies buried thousands of years ago, planted now come up as luxuriantly and easily as grains of corn that grew last year, planted this springtime. Oh, the gorgeous upholstery in one tuft of mountain moss! Oh, the triumphal arch in one tree branch! Oh, the God in an atom!

Where is the loom in which he wove the curtains of the morning? Where is the vat of beauty out of which he dipped the crimson and the gold and the saffron and the blue and the green and the red? Where are the molds in which he ran out the Alps and the Pyrenees? Where is the harp that gave the warble to the lark and the sweet call to the robin and the carol to the canary and the chirp to the grasshopper?

It is the same God who has all your affairs and mine under his care and guidance. The same God who pairs the birds in this springtime gave us our companions. The same God who shows the chaffinch how to care for her brood will protect our children. The same God who shows the sparrow in the springtime how to build its nest will give us a habitation. The same God who gathers the down for pheasant's breast will give us apparel. The same God who this day feeds the squirrels in the wood will feed us. The same God who swung a bridge of

gossamer for the insect to walk over has marked out all our pathway. Praise his name! None of us so insignificant as to miss his care. O ye who are worried about your health, and worried about reputation, and worried about your children, and worried about everything in these springtime days, go out and listen to the chirp of the English sparrow in our fields. Are ye not of more value than many sparrows? Behold the fowls of the air, they gather not into barns, yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them, O ye of little faith.

Again the season suggests the wisdom of right building of the home nest. I have noticed that birds build always with reference to safety. Safety against the elements, safety against intruders. But the trouble with us is that we are not so wise and some of us build too high and some of us build too low. God said to Obadiah, "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle and though thou set thy nest among the stars thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord." The eagle constructs its nest at an inaccessible height with rough materials and large sticks by strong claws gathered from great distances. The eider-duck takes its own feathers to help make up the nest. The magpie surrounds its nest with briers to keep off invaders. I have hour after hour studied the structure of a bird's nest—a structure having more than mathematical accuracy, and more than human ingenuity. Sometimes built in trees, sometimes built in rocks, sometimes built in the eaves of dwellings, but always in reference to safety—safety for themselves and safety from intruders. Wiser than some of us, for we are apt to build too high, or too low. He who tries to find his satisfaction in the pleasures of this world, the applause of this world, the emoluments of this world will come to disturbance and will come to destruction. There are weasels, there are foxes, there are hawks of temptation ever hunting for

prey and the only safe place in which to build a nest is the tree of the cross, and the only safe rock on which to build a nest is the Rock of Ages.

Once more this season of the bird anthem suggests to me the superlative glories of heaven. If this world blasted with sin and swept with storms is still so beautiful, what must be the attraction of the sinless world toward which we travel? This springtime I had an opportunity of seeing almost all the phases of the spring as I went southward, from the opening buds of the northern orchards down to the blush of the gardens reaching across many States. But my friends, the magnificence of nature after all is only the corpse of a dead Paradise, it is only the charred hulk of a giant vessel, which six thousand years ago foundered and has ever since been beating on the rocks. Now I say if this world notwithstanding all the curse of thousands of years is so beautiful what must be that land toward which we go? that land from which all sorrow and sighing and sin and curse is banished, and even sun and moon are too common because the Lamb is the light thereof.

In a little while there will be no pause in the melody of the woods, "for the time of the singing of birds is come." Whether it be a warble or a chant or a carol or a chirp or a croak, God will be praised by it as the songsters of the forests, clutching a leaf as though the notes were on it, send forth their joy answered by a score of applauding echoes.

XLVI

The Queen of Festivals

Easter

The royal court of the Sabbaths is made up of fifty-two. Fifty-one are the princes in the royal household, but Easter is queen. She wears a richer diadem, she sways a more jeweled scepter, and in her smile nations are irradiated. How welcome she is when after a harsh winter and late spring, she seems to step out of the snow-bank rather than the conservatory, to come out of the North instead of the South, out of the arctic rather than the tropics; but welcome this queenly day, holding high in her right hand the wrenched-off bolt of Christ's sepulcher, and holding high in her left hand the key to all the cemeteries in Christendom.

Paul wrote right on in his argument about the resurrection and observed all the laws of logic, but when he came to write the words, "Death is swallowed up in victory!" his fingers and his pen and the parchment on which he wrote took fire. It is an exciting thing to see an army routed and flying. They run each other down. They scatter everything valuable in the track. Unwheeled artillery. Hoof of horse on breast of wounded and dying man. You have read of the French falling back from Sedan, of Napoleon's track of ninety thousand corpses in the snowbanks of Russia, of the retreat of our own armies from Manassas, or of the five kings tumbling over the rocks of Bethoron with their armies, while the hailstorms of heaven and the swords of Joshua's host struck

them with their fury. In my text is a worse discomfiture. It seems that a black giant proposed to conquer the earth. He gathered for his host all the aches and pains and malarias and cancers and distempers and epidemics of the ages. He marched them down, drilling them in the northeast wind and amid the slush of tempests. He threw up barricades of gravemound. He pitched tent of charnel house. Some of the troops marched with slow tread commanded by consumptions, some in double-quick commanded by pneumonias. Some he took by long besiegement of evil habit, and some by one stroke of the battle-ax of casualty. With bony hand he pounded at the door of hospitals and sick rooms and won all the victories in all the great battlefields of all the five continents. Forward march! ordered the conqueror of conquerors, and all the generals and commanders-in-chief and all presidents and kings and sultans and czars dropped under the feet of his war-charger. But one Christmas night his antagonist was born. As most of the plagues and sicknesses and despotisms come out of the East, it was appropriate that the conqueror should come out of the same quarter. Power is given him to awaken all the fallen of all the centuries, and of all lands, and marshal them against the black giant. Fields have already been won, but the last day of the world's existence will see the decisive battle. When Christ shall lead forth his two brigades, the brigade of the risen dead and the brigade of the celestial host, the black giant will fall back, and the brigade from the risen sepulchers will take him from beneath and the brigade of descending immortals will take him from above, and death shall be swallowed up in victory.

The old braggart that threatened the conquest and demolition of the planet has lost his throne, has lost his scepter, has lost his palace, has lost his prestige, and the

one word written over all the gates of mausoleum and catacomb and necropolis, on cenotaph and sarcophagus, on the lonely khan of the arctic explorer, and on the catafalque of great cathedral, written in capitals of azalea and calla lily, written in musical cadence, written on the sculptured door of the family vault, is "victory." Coronal word, embannered word, apocalyptic word, chief word of triumphal arch under which conquerors return.

Victory! Word shouted at Culloden and Balaklava and Blenheim, at Megiddo and Solferino, at Marathon where the Athenians drove back the Medes; at Poitiers, where Charles Martel broke the ranks of the Saracens; at Salamis, where Themistocles in the great sea-fight confounded the Persians, and at the door of the Eastern cavern of chiseled rock, where Christ came out through a recess and throttled the King of Terrors and put him back in the niche from which the celestial Conqueror had just emerged. When the jaws of the Eastern mausoleum took down the black giant "death was swallowed up in victory." I proclaim the abolition of death.

The old antagonist is driven back into mythology with all the lore about Stygian ferry and Charon with oar and boat. Melrose Abbey and Kenilworth Castle are no more in ruins than is the sepulcher. We shall have no more to do with death than we have with the cloakroom at a governor's or president's levee. We stop at such a cloakroom and leave in charge of a servant our overcoat, and outward apparel, that we may not be impeded in the brilliant round of the drawing-room. Well, my friends, when we go out of this world we are going to a King's banquet, and at the door of the tomb we leave the cloak of flesh and the wrappings with which we meet the storms of this world. At the close of an earthly reception, under the brush of the porter the coat or hat may be handed to us better than when we resigned it, and the cloak of

humanity will finally be returned to us improved and brightened and purified and glorified.

You and I do not want our bodies returned as they are now. We want to get rid of all their weaknesses and all their susceptibilities to fatigue and all their slowness of locomotion. We want them put through a chemistry of soil and heat and cold and changing seasons, out of which God will reconstruct them as much better than they are now as the body of the rosiest and healthiest child that bounds over the lawn in Central Park is better than the sickest patient in Bellevue Hospital. But as to our soul, we will cross right over, not waiting for obsequies, independent of obituary, into a state in every way better, with wider room and velocities, beyond computation; the dull-est of us into companionship with the very best spirits in their very best mood. Victory.

This view of course makes it of but little importance whether we are cremated or sepulchred. If the latter is dust to dust, the former is ashes to ashes. If any prefer incineration let them have it without cavil or protest. The world may become so crowded that cremation may be universally adopted by law as well as by general consent. Many of the mightiest and best spirits have gone through this process. Thousands and tens of thousands of God's children have been cremated—P. P. Bliss and wife, the evangelistic singers, cremated by accident at Ashtabula Bridge; John Rogers, cremated by persecution; Latimer and Ridley, cremated at Oxford. Alexander, a physician, and his comrades cremated at the order of Marcus Aurelius—at least a hundred thousand of Christ's disciples cremated and there can be no doubt about the resurrection of their bodies. The most of us prefer the old way. But whether out of natural disintegration or cremation, we shall get the luminous, buoyant, gladsome, transcendent, magnificent, inexplicable structure called

the resurrection body, you will have it, I will have it. I say to you, as Paul said to Agrippa: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" That far-up cloud higher than the hawk flies, higher than the eagle flies, what is it made of? Drops of water from a river, other drops from a lake, still other drops from a stagnant pool, but now embodied in a cloud and kindled by the sun. If God can make such a lustrous cloud out of water drops, many of them soiled and impure and fetched from miles away, can he not transport the fragments of a human body from the earth and out of them build a radiant body? Cannot God, who owns all the material out of which bones and muscle and flesh are made, set them up again if they have fallen? If a manufacturer of telescopes drops a telescope on the floor and it breaks can he not mend it again so you can see through it? and if God drops the human eye into the dust, the eye which he originally fashioned, can he not restore it?

"Why should it be thought with you an incredible thing that God should raise the dead?" Things all around us suggest it. Out of what grew all these flowers? Out of the mold and the earth. Resurrected! Resurrected! The radiant butterfly, where did it come from? The loathsome caterpillar. That albatross that smites the tempest with its wings, where did it come from? A senseless shell. Near Bergerac, France, in a Celtic tomb under a block, were found flower seeds that had been buried two thousand years. The explorer took the flower seed and planted it, and it came up; it bloomed in bluebell and heliotrope. Two thousand years ago buried, yet resurrected. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" The insects flew and the worms crawled last autumn feebler and feebler, and then stopped. They have taken no food. They want

none. They lie dormant and insensible, but soon the south wind will blow the resurrection trumpet, and the air and the earth will be full of them. Do you not think that God can do as much for our bodies as he does for the wasps and the spiders and the snails? This morning at half-past four o'clock there was a resurrection. Out of the night, the day. In a few weeks there will be a resurrection in all our gardens. Why not some day a resurrection amid all the graves?

Does not this waking up of insects from winter lifelessness, and this waking up of grains buried three thousand years ago make it easier for you to believe that your body and mine after the vacation of the grave shall rise and rally, though there be three thousand years between our last breath and the sounding of the archangelic reveille? Do you wonder that on Easter day we swathe our churches with garlands? Do you wonder we celebrate it with the most consecrated voice of song that we can invite, with the deftest fingers on organ and harp, and with doxologies that beat these arches with the billows of sound as the sea smites the basalt at Giant's Causeway? Only the bad disapprove of the Resurrection. A cruel heathen warrior heard Mr. Moffat, the missionary, preach about the resurrection, and he said to the missionary: "Will my father rise in the last day?" "Yes," said the missionary: "Will all the dead in battle rise?" said the cruel chieftain. "Yes," said the missionary. Then said the warrior, "Let me hear no more about the resurrection, there can be no resurrection, there shall be no resurrection. I have slain thousands in battle. Will they rise?" Ah, there will be more to rise on that day than those whose crimes have never been repented of will want to see. But for all others who allowed Christ to be their pardon and their life and their resurrection it will be a day of victory.

The thunders of the last day will be the salvo that greets you into harbor. The lightnings will be only the torches of triumphal procession marching down to escort you home. The burning worlds flashing through the immensity will be the rockets celebrating your coronation on thrones where you will reign forever and forever and forever. Where is death? What have we to do with death? As your reunited body and soul swing off from this planet on that last day you will see deep gashes all through the valleys, and they will be the emptied graves, they will be the abandoned sepulchers with rough ground tossed on each side of them and slabs will lie uneven on the rent hillocks and there will be fallen monuments and cenotaphs and then for the first time you will appreciate the full exhilaration of the text, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

The Sword Sheathed in Flowers

Decoration Day

Under the God of Armies we meet. He has been on one or the other side of the great fights of the ages. He was present with indignation and pity at the great hemorrhages of the world, Salamis, Marathon, Navarre, Leipzig, Sedan, Waterloo, Gettysburg. He saw all the armies of the ages march and where they fell. He presides over all grave trenches and all the national cemeteries, and not a private soldier that was sacrificed in all the wars of the centuries but God knows where his dust is as well as though for every man there had been built a monument of marble, glorified from base to top with epitaph and eulogium. Over all the armies of the living and over all the armies of the dead! "The Lord of hosts is his name."

In the springtime the American nation kneels with cool bandage of garlands to bind up the wounds of battle. War is more ghastly now than once, not only because of the greater destructiveness of its weaponry, but because now it takes down the best men, whereas once it chiefly took down the worst. Bruce, in 1717, in his *Institutions of Military Law* said of the European armies of his day: "If all infamous persons and such as have committed capital crimes, heretics, atheists, and all dastardly and feminine men were weeded out of the army it would soon be reduced to a pretty moderate number." Flogging and mean pay made them still more ignoble.

Officers were appointed to see that each soldier drank his ration of a pint of spirits a day. There were noble men in battle, but the moral character of an army then was ninety-five per cent lower than the moral character of an army to-day. By so much is war now the more detestable, because it destroys the picked men of the nations. I think the time has come when Christian nations ought to substitute arbitration and treaty in the place of wholesale massacre. Enough the tears. Enough the blood. Enough the bereavement. Enough the martyrdom.

By the annual ceremony of Decoration Day we propose vividly to impress the rising generation. Subtract 1865, when the war ended, from 1883 and you will realize what a vast number of people were born since the war or were so young as to have no vivid appreciation. No one under twenty-eight years of age has any adequate memory of that prolonged horror. Young man, do you remember it? "Well," you say, "I only remember that mother swooned away while she was reading the newspaper and that they brought my father home wrapped in a flag, and that a good many people came in the house to pray and that mother faded away after that until again there were many people in the house and they told me she was dead." There are others who cannot remember the roll of the drum, or the tramp of the regiment, or a sigh or a tear of that tornado of woe that swept the nation again and again until there was one dead in every house. Now it is the religious duty of those who do remember it to tell those who do not. My young friends, there were such partings at rail-car windows and steamboat wharves and at front doors of comfortable homes as I pray God you may never witness. Oh, what a time it was when fathers and mothers gave up their sons, never expecting to see them again, and never did see

them again until they came back mutilated and crushed and dead. Four years of hostile experience. Four years of ghastliness. Four years of grave-digging. Four years of funerals, coffins, shrouds, hearses, dirges. Mourning! Mourning! Mourning! It was hell let loose.

What a time of waiting for news! Morning paper and evening paper scrutinized for intelligence from the boys at the front. First announcement that the battle must occur the next day. Then the news of the battle's going on. On the following day still going on. Then news of thirty thousand slain, and of the names of the great generals who had fallen, but no news about the private soldiers. Waiting for news! After many days a load of wounded going through the town or city, but no news of our boy. Then a long list of wounded and a long list of the dead and a long list of the missing? How missing? Who saw him last? Missing! missing! Was he in the woods or by the stream? How was he hurt? Missing! Missing! What burning prayers that he may yet be heard from! In that awful waiting for news many a life perished. The strain of anxiety was too great. That wife's brain gave way the first week after the battle and ever and anon she walks the floor of the asylum or looks out of the window as though she expected some one to come along the path and up the steps as she soliloquizes: "Missing! Missing!"

What made matters worse, all this might have been avoided. There was no more need of that war than that at this moment I should plunge a dagger through your heart. There were a few Christian philanthropists in those days scoffed at both by North and South, who had the right of it. If they had been heard on both sides we should have had no war, no slavery.

I swear you by the graves of your fathers and brothers and sons to a new hatred for the champion curse of the

universe—war! O Lord God, with the hottest bolt of thine indignation strike that monster down forever and ever. Imprison it in the deepest dungeon of the eternal penitentiary. Bolt it in with all the iron ever forged in cannon or molded into howitzers. Cleave it with all the sabers that ever glittered in battle and wring its soul with all the pangs which it ever caused. Let it feel all the conflagration of the homesteads it ever destroyed. Deeper down let it fall and in fiercer flame let it burn till it has gathered into its heart all the suffering of eternity as well as all time. In the name of the millions of graves of its victims I curse it! The nations need more the spirit of treaty and less of the spirit of war, less of the Disraelian, and more of the Gladstonian.

Again by this national ceremony we mean to honor courage. Many of these departed soldiers were volunteers, not conscripts, and many of those who were drafted might have provided a substitute or deserted. The fact that they lie in their graves is proof of their bravery. Brave at the front, brave at the cannon's mouth, brave on lonely picket duty, brave in cavalry charge, brave before the surgeon, brave in the dying message to the home circle. We put a garland on the brow of courage. The world wants more of it. The Church of God is in woeful need of men who can stand under fire. The lion of worldly derision roars and the sheep tremble. In the great reformatory movements, at the first shot how many fall back! The great obstacle to the Church's advancement is the inanity, the vacuity, the soft prettiness, the namby-pambyism of professed Christians. Great on parade, cowards in battle. They go into battle not with warrior's gauntlet, but with kid gloves, not clutching the sword-hilt too tight lest the glove split at the back. In all our reformatory and Christian work the great want is backbone, more mettle, more daring, more prowess.

We would in all our churches like to trade off a hundred do-nothings for one do-everything. "Quit yourselves like men; be strong."

Again we mean by this national observance to honor self-sacrifice for others. To all these departed men home and kindred were as dear as our home and kindred are to us. Do you know how they felt? Just as you and I would feel starting out to-morrow morning with nine chances out of ten against our returning alive; for the intelligent soldier sees not only battle ahead but malarial sickness and exhaustion. Had these men chosen, they could have spent last night in their homes and to-day have been seated where you are. They chose the camp, not because they liked it better than their own house, and followed the drum and fife, not because they were better music than the voices of the domestic circle. South Mountain and Murfreesboro and the swamps of Chickahominy were not playgrounds. These heroes risked and lost all for others. There is no higher sublimity than that. To keep three-quarters for ourselves and give one-quarter to others is honorable. To divide even with others is generous. To keep nothing for ourselves and give all for others is magnanimity, Christlike. You want to know what we dry theologians mean when we talk of vicarious suffering. Look at the soldiers' graves on Decoration Day and find out. Vicarious! pangs for others, wounds for others, homesickness for others, blood for others, sepulcher for others.

Those who visit the national cemeteries at Arlington Heights and at Richmond and Gettysburg will see one inscription on soldiers' tomb oftener repeated than any other—"Unknown." When several years ago I was called to deliver the oration at Arlington Heights, Washington, I was not as much impressed with the minute guns that shook the earth, or with the attendance of President and

Cabinet and foreign ministers and generals of the army and commodores of the navy, as with the pathetic and overwhelming suggestiveness of that epitaph on so many graves at my feet, "Unknown!" "Unknown!" It seems to me that the time must come when the Government of the United States shall take off that epitaph. They are no more unknown! We have found them out at last. They are the beloved sons of the Republic.

Would it not be well to take the statue of the heathen goddess off the top of the Capitol at Washington (for I have no faith in the morals of a heathen goddess) and put one great statue in all our national cemeteries—a statue of liberty in the form of a Christian woman with her hand on an open Bible and her foot on the Rock of Ages, with the other hand pointing down to the graves of the unknown saying, "These are my sons who died that I might live." Take off the misnomer. Everybody knows them. It is of comparatively little importance what was the name given them in baptism of water. In the holier and mightier baptism of blood we know them, and on Decoration Day the Nation puts both arms around them and hugs them to her heart, crying: "Mine forever!"

Again by this national ceremony we propose the future defense of this nation. By every wreath of flowers on the soldiers' graves we say, "Those who die for the country shall not be forgotten," and that will give enthusiasm to our young men in case our nation should in the future need to defend itself in battle. When I spoke against war I said nothing against self-defense. There is no room on this continent for any other nation—except Canada, and a better neighbor no one ever had. If you do not think so, go to Montreal and Toronto, and see how well they will treat you. Other than that there is absolutely no room for any other nation. I have been across the continent again and again, and know that we have not

a half inch of ground for the gouty foot of foreign despotism to stand on. But I am not so sure that some of the arrogant nations of Europe may not some day challenge us. I do not know that those forts around New York Bay are to sleep all through the next century. I do not know that Barnegat lighthouse will not yet look off upon a hostile navy. I do not know but that a half dozen nations, envious of our prosperity, may want to give us a wrestle. During our Civil War there were two or three nations that could hardly keep their hands off us. It is very easy to pick national quarrels, and if our nation escapes much longer it will be the exception. If foreign foe should come we want men like those of 1812 and like those of 1862 to meet them. We want them all up and down the coast, Pulaski and Fort Sumter in the same chorus to thunder as Fort Lafayette and Fort Hamilton—men who will not only know how to fight but how to die.

Once more, this national ceremony means the beautification of the tombs whether of those who fell in battle or accident, or who have expired in their beds or in our arms or on our laps. I suppose you have noticed that many of the families take this season as the time for adornment of their family plots. This national observance has secured the arboriculture and floriculture of the cemeteries, the straightening up of many a slab planted thirty or forty years ago, and has swung the scythe through the long grass, and has brought the stonecutter to call out the half obliterated epitaph. This day is the benediction of the resting place of father and mother, son, daughter, brother, sister. It is all that we can do for them now. Make their resting place attractive, not absurd with costly outlay, but in quiet remembrance. You know how. If you can afford only one flower that will do. It shows what you would do if you could. One

blossom from you may mean more than the Duke of Wellington's catafalque. We cannot afford to forget them. They were so lovely to us. We miss them so much. We will never get over it. Blessed Lord Jesus comfort our broken hearts. From every bank of flowers breathes promise of resurrection. In olden times the Hebrews, returning from their burial-place, used to pluck the grass from the field three or four times, then throw it over their heads, suggestive of the Resurrection. We pick not the grass, but the flowers, and instead of throwing them over our heads we place them before our eyes, right down over the silent heart that once beat with warmest love toward us or over the still feet that ran to serve us, or over the lips from which we took the kiss at the anguish of the last parting. But stop! We are not infidels. Our bodies will soon join the bodies of our departed in the tomb, and our spirits shall join their spirits in the land of the rising sun. We cannot long be separated. Instead of crying with Jacob for Joseph, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning," let us cry with David, "I shall go to him."

On one of the gates of Greenwood is the quaint inscription, "A night's lodging on the way to the City of the New Jerusalem." Comfort one another with these words. May the hand of him who shall wipe away all tears from all eyes wipe your cheek with its softest tenderness. The Christ of Mary and Martha and Lazarus will enfold you in his arms. The white-robed angels who sat at the tomb of Jesus will yet roll the stone from the door of your dead in radiant resurrection. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and the voice of the archangel. So the Dead March in Saul shall become the Hallelujah Chorus.

XLVIII

The Wheel

Thanksgiving Day

Man, a small speck in the universe, was set down in a big world, high mountains rising before him, deep seas arresting his pathway, and wild beasts capable of his destruction; yet he was to conquer. It could not be by physical force, for compare his arm with the ox's horn and the elephant's tusk, and how weak he is! It could not be by physical speed, for compare him to the antelope's foot and ptarmigan's wing, and how slow he is! It could not be by physical capacity to soar or plunge, for the condor beats him in one direction and the porpoise in the other. Yet he was to conquer the world. Two eyes, two hands, two feet, were not sufficient. He must be reënforced, so God sent the wheel.

Twenty-two times is the wheel mentioned in the Bible. Sometimes as in Ezekiel, illustrating providential movement; sometimes, as in the Psalms crushing the bad; sometimes as in Judges representing God's charioted progress. The wheel that started in Exodus rolls on through Proverbs, through Isaiah, through Jeremiah, through Daniel, through Nahab, through the centuries—all the time gathering momentum and splendor, until seeing what it has done for the world's progress and happiness, we clap our hands in thanksgiving and employ the apostrophe of Ezekiel, crying, "O Wheel!"

I call on you to praise God for the triumphs of machinery which have revolutionized the world and multi-

plied its attractions. Even Paradise, though very picturesque, must have been comparatively dull. Hardly anything going on. No agriculture needed, for the harvest was spontaneous. No architecture required, for they slept under the trees. No manufacturer's loom necessary for the weaving of apparel, for the fashions were exceedingly simple. To dress in the garden could not have required ten minutes a day.

Having nothing to do, they got into mischief and ruined themselves and the race. It was a sad thing to be turned out of Paradise, but once turned out a beneficial thing to be compelled to work. To help man up and on, God sent the wheel. If turned ahead, the race advances; if turned back, the race retreats. To arouse your gratitude and exalt your praise, I would show you what the wheel has done for the domestic world, for the agricultural world, for the traveling world, for the literary world. "As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel!"

In the domestic world the wheel has wrought revolution. Behold the sewing machine! It has shattered the housewife's bondage and prolonged woman's life and added immeasurable advantages. The needle of ages had punctured the eyes and pierced the side and made terrible massacre. To prepare the garments of a whole household in the spring for summer, and in the autumn for winter, was an exhausting process. "Stitch! stitch! stitch!" Thomas Hood set it to poetry, but millions of persons have found it agonizing prose.

Slain by the sword, we buried the hero with "Dead March in Saul" and flags half mast. Slain by the needle, no one knew it but the household that watched her health give way.

I look into the agricultural world to see what the wheel has accomplished. Look at the stalks of wheat and oats,

the one bread for man the other bread for the horses. Coat off, and with a cradle made out of five or six fingers of wood and one of sharp steel the harvester went across the field stroke after stroke, perspiration rolling down forehead and cheek and chest, head blistered by the consuming sun and lip parched by the merciless August air. At noon the workmen lying half dead under the trees. The grain brought to the barn, the sheaves were unbound and spread on a threshing floor and two men with flails stood opposite each other hour after hour and day after day pounding the wheat out of the stalk. Two strokes and then a cessation of sound. Thump, thump, thump, thump! Pounded once and then turned over to be pounded again. Slow, very slow. The hens cackled and clucked by the door, and picked up the loose grains, and the horses half asleep and dozing over the mangers where the hay had been.

But hark to the buzz of wheels in the distance! The farmer has taken his throne on the reaper. He once walked, now he rides. Once worked with arm of flesh, now with arm of iron. He starts at the end of the wheat field, heads his horses to the opposite end of the field, rides on. At the stroke of his iron chariot the gold of the grain is surrendered; the machine rolling this way and rolling that, until the work that would have been accomplished in many days is accomplished in a few hours. The grain field prostrate before the harvesters.

Then I look to see what the wheel has done for the traveling world. No one can tell how many noble and self-sacrificing inventors have been crushed between the coach wheel and the modern locomotive, between the paddle and the ocean steamer.

All the rivers and lakes and seas have turned white with rage under the smiting of the steamboat wheel. In the phosphorescent wake of it sail the world's commercial

prosperities. Through the axle of that wheel nations join hands and America says to Venice, "Give me your pictures," and to France, "Give me your graceful apparel," and to England, "Give me your Sheffield knives and Manchester goods and I will give you bread-stuffs, corn, rye and rice. I will give you cotton for your mills; I will give you cattle for your slaughter houses. Give me all you have to spare and I will give you all I have to spare." And transatlantic and cisatlantic nations grasp each other's hands in brotherhood.

The ocean wheel turns swifter and swifter, filling up the distance between the hemispheres, and hastening the time spoken of in the Book of Revelation, when there shall be no more sea.

While this has been doing on the water, James Watt's wheel has done as much on the land. How well I remember Sanderson's stagecoach, running from New Brunswick to Easton, as he drove through Somerville, New Jersey, turning up to the post-office and dropping the mail-bags with ten letters and two or three newspapers; on the box, Sanderson, himself, six feet two inches, and well proportioned, long lash-whip in his hand, the reins of six horses in the other, the "leaders" lathered along the lines of the traces, foam dripping from the bits. It was the event of the day when the stage came in. It was our highest ambition to become a stage driver. Some of the boys climbed on the great leathern boot of the stage, and those of us who could not get on shouted, "Cut behind!" I saw the old stage driver not long ago, and I expressed to him my surprise that one around whose head I had seen a halo of glory in my boyhood time was only a man like the rest of us. Between Sanderson's stagecoach and a Chicago express train what a difference! All the great cities of the nation strung on an iron thread of railways!

At Doncaster, England, I saw George Stevenson's first locomotive. If in good repair it could run yet, but because of its make and size it would be a burlesque of all railroaders. Between that rude machine, crawling down the iron track, followed by a clumsy and bouncing train, and one of our Rocky Mountain locomotives, with a village of palace cars, becoming drawing-rooms by day and princely dormitories by night, what a progress!

See that train move out from one of our great depots for a thousand miles' journey. All aboard. Tickets clipped and baggage checked, and porters attentive to every want. Under tunnels dripping with dampness that never saw the light. Along ledges where an inch off the track would be the difference between a hundred men living and a hundred dead. Full head of steam, and two men in the locomotive charged with all the responsibility of whistle and Westinghouse brake. Clank, clank! go the wheels. Clank, clank! echo the rocks. Small villages only hear the thunder and see the whirlwind as the train shoots past. A city on the wing! Thrilling, startling, sublime, magnificent, spectacular—a rail train in lightning procession.

All the wheels of the tens of thousands of freight cars, wrecking cars, cabooses, drawing-room cars, sleeping cars, passenger cars of the accommodation, express and special trains started by the wheel of the grotesque locomotive that I saw at Doncaster. For what it has done for all Christendom, I ejaculate in the language of Ezekiel, "O Wheel!"

I look into the literary world and see what the wheel has accomplished. I am more astounded with this than anything that has preceded. Behold the almost miraculous printing press. Do you not feel the ground shake with the machinery of the New York, Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, and Western dailies? Some of

us remember when the hand ink roller was run over the cylinder, and by great haste eight hundred copies of the village newspaper were issued in one day and no lives lost; but invention has crowded invention and wheel jostled wheel, stereotyping, electrotyping, taking their places. Benjamin Franklin's press giving way to Lord Stanhope's press; and the Washington press and the Victory press and the Hoe perfecting press have been set up. Together with the newspaper come the publication of innumerable books of history, of poetry, of romance, of art, of travel, of biography, of religion, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and Bibles. Some of these presses send forth the most accursed stuff, but the good predominates. Turn on with wider sweep and greater velocity, O wheel! Wheel of light, wheel of civilization, wheel of Christianity, wheel of divine momentum.

On these four wheels—that of the sewing machine, that of the reaper, that of travel, that of the printing press—the world has moved up to its present prosperity. I call on you to thank God for the triumphs of machinery as seen in our home comforts and added nation grandeur.

And now I gather on an imaginary platform, as I literally did gather them on Thanksgiving days when I preached in Brooklyn, specimens of our American products. Here is corn from the West, a foretaste of the great harvest that is to come down on our seaboard; enough for ourselves and for foreign shipment. Here is rice from the South, never more beautiful product grown on the planet, mingling the gold and green. Here is cotton, the wealthiest product of America. Here is sugar cane, enough to sweeten the beverages of an empire. Who would think that out of such a homely stalk there would come such a luscious product? Here are palmetto trees that have in their pulses the warmth of southern climes. Here is the cactus of the South, so beautiful and

so tempting it must go armed. Here are the products of American mines. This is iron, this is coal,—the iron prying out the coal, the coal melting the iron. This is silver, silver from Colorado and Nevada. Here is mica from the quarries of New Hampshire. How beautiful it looks in the sunlight! Here is copper from Lake Superior, so heavy I dare not lift it. Here is gold from Virginia and Georgia. Here are the apples, making you think of the long winter nights of your boyhood when the neighbors came in and you had apples and hickory nuts and cider. Here is corn from New Jersey. Here are lemons and oranges. Here are bananas from Florida. What a magnificent growth it is. What a leaf, implying shadow, comfort and refuge.

I look around me on this imaginary platform and it seems as if the waves of agriculture, mineralogical, pomological wealth dash to the platform and I lift up my voice in Thanksgiving joy for our national prosperity and for what God has done for the North, and South, and East, and West.

XLIX

The Manger

Christmas

At midnight from one of the galleries of the sky a chant broke out. To an ordinary observer there was no reason for such a celestial demonstration. A poor man and wife—travelers, Joseph and Mary by name—had lodged in an outhouse of an unimportant village. The supreme hour of solemnity had passed, and upon the pallid forehead and cheek of Mary, God had set the dignity, the grandeur, the tenderness, the everlasting and divine significance of motherhood. But such scenes had often occurred in Bethlehem, yet never before had a star been unfixed, or had a baton of light marshaled over the hills' winged orchestra. If there had been such brilliant and mighty recognition at an advent in the house of Pharaoh, or at an advent in the house of Cæsar, or the house of Stuart, we would not so much have wondered; but a barn seems too poor a center for such delicate and archangelic circumference. The stage seems too small for so great an act, the music too grand for such unappreciable auditors, the window of the stable too rude to be serenaded by other worlds.

No! It is my joy to tell you what was born that night in the village barn; and as I want to make it accumulative and climacteric, I begin in the first place, telling you that that night in the Bethlehem manger was born encouragement for all the poorly started. He had only two friends—they his parents. No satin-lined cradle, no delicate

attentions, but straw, and the cattle, and the coarse joke and banter of the camel drivers. No wonder the medieval painters represent the oxen as kneeling before the infant Jesus, for there were no men there at that time to worship. From the depths of that he rose until to-day he is honored in all Christendom and sits on the imperial throne of heaven.

What name is mightiest to-day in Christendom? Jesus. Who has more friends on earth than any other? Jesus. Before whom do the most thousands kneel in chapel and church and cathedral this hour? Jesus. From what depth of poverty, to what height of renown. So let all those who are poorly started remember they cannot be more poorly born or more disadvantageously than this Christ.

Do you know that the vast majority of the world's deliverers had barn-like birthplaces? That nine out of ten of the world's deliverers, nine out of ten of the world's messiahs—the messiahs of science, the messiahs of law, the messiahs of medicine, the messiahs of grand benevolence—were born in want.

What encouragement for those who are poorly started! Ye who think yourselves far down, aspire to go higher up. I stir your holy ambitions to-day and I want to tell you, although the world may be opposed to you, and inside and outside of your occupations or professions there may be those who would hinder your ascent, on your side and enlisted in your behalf are the sympathetic heart and the almighty arm of One who one Christmas night about eighteen hundred and eighty years ago was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

In that village barn was also born good-will to men, whether you call it kindness, or forbearance, or forgiveness, or geniality, or affection, or love.

The world wants more than anything else more helping

hands, more sympathetic hearts, more kind words, and to ascribe good motives instead of bad, and to find happiness in making others happy. "Good-will to men."

But greatest of all that night in that village barn was the offender's hope. Some may say I ought to have projected this thought at the beginning. Oh! I wanted you to rise toward it. I wanted you to examine the cornelians and the jaspers, and the emeralds and the sapphires before I showed you the Kohinoor—the crown jewel of the ages. That jewel had a very poor setting. The cub of bear is born amid the grand old pillars of the forest, the whelp of lion takes its first step in the jungle of luxuriant leaf and wild flower, the kid of goat is born in cavern chandelier—with stalactite, and chandeliered with stalagmite. But Christ was born in a bare barn. Yet that nativity was the offender's hope. Christ came through the door of the manger, and he departed through the door of the sepulcher, and his one business was so to wash away our sin that one second after we are dead there will be no more sin about us than about the eternal God. I know that is putting it strongly, but that is what I understand by full remission. All erased, all washed away, all scoured out; all gone. That undergirding, and overarching, and irradiating, and imparadising possibility for you and for me, and for the whole race was given that Christmas night.

Now I find the swaddling clothes enlarging and emblazoning into an imperial robe of a conqueror. Now I come to understand that the music of that night was not a completed song, but only the stringing of the instruments for a great chorus of two worlds, the bass to be carried by earthly nations saved, the soprano by kingdoms of glory won.

What a Christmas morning it will make when those with whom you used to keep the holidays are all around

you in heaven! Silver-haired old father young again, and mother who had so many aches and pains well again, and all your brothers and sisters and the little ones. How glad they will be to see you again. They have been waiting. The last time they saw you your face was covered with tears, and distress, and pallid from long watching.

Those Bethlehem angels, when they went back after the concert that night over the hills, forgot to shut the door. All the secret is out. No more trying to hide from us the glories to come. It is blocked wide open with the hosannahs marching this way and the hallelujahs marching that way. Heaven, where our loved ones are, heaven where Christ is. What almost unmans me is the thought that it is provided for such sinners as you and I have been. If it had been provided only for those who had always thought right and spoken right, and acted right, you and I would have had no interest in it, had no share in it. We would have let the ship of Salvation sail by carrying perfect passengers from a perfect life on earth to a perfect life in heaven. But I have heard the commander of that ship is the same great and glorious and sympathetic One who hushed the tempest around Galilee, and I have heard that all the passengers on the ship are sinners saved by grace, and so come by the side of it and ask the captain two questions: "Who art Thou? and whence?" and he says, "I am the Captain of Salvation, and I am from the manger."

Chime all the bells! Wreathe all the garlands! Rouse all the anthems! Merry Christmas! Merry with the thought of sins forgiven, merry with the idea of sorrows comforted, merry with the raptures to come. Christmas bells ring out the peace of nations! We want on our standards less of the lion and eagle, and more of the dove. Let all the cannon be dismounted and the war horses change their gorgeous caparisons for plow harness.

Let us have fewer bullets and more bread. The peace society was born in the clouds and its resolution was passed unanimously by angelic voices, "Peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Oh, lift that Christ from the manger and lay him down in all our hearts. We may not bring him as costly a present as the Magi brought, but we bring to his feet and to the manger the frankincense of our joy, the pearls of our tears, the kiss of our love, the prostration of our worship.

L

How Old Art Thou?

New Years

On this first day of the new year I feel that it is not an inappropriate question that I ask you, as Pharaoh did Jacob, the patriarch: "How old art thou?" People who are truthful on every other subject lie about their ages, so that I do not solicit from you any literal response to the question I have asked. I would put no one under temptation; but I simply want to see by what rod it is we are measuring our earthly existence. There is a right way and wrong way of measuring a door, or a wall, or an arch, or a tower, and so there is a right way and a wrong way of measuring our earthly existence. It is with reference to this higher meaning that I confront you with the stupendous question: "How old art thou?"

There are many who estimate their life by mere worldly gratification. I have to tell you that a man who estimates his life on earth by mere worldly gratification is a most unwise man. Our life is not to be a game of chess. It is not a dance in the lighted hall, to quick music. It is not a banquet with intoxication and roistering. It is the first step on a ladder that mounts into the skies, or the first step on a road that plunges into a horrible abyss. "How old art thou?" Toward what destiny are you tending, and how fast are you getting on toward it?

There are many who estimate their life on earth by their sorrows and misfortunes. Through a great many of your lives the plowshare hath gone very deep, turning

up a terrible furrow. You have been betrayed, and misrepresented, and set upon, and slapped of impertinence, and pounded of misfortune. The brightest life must have its shadows, and the smoothest path its thorns. On the happiest brood the hawk pounces. No escape from trouble of some kind.

And yet it is unfair to measure a man's life by his misfortunes, because where there is one stalk of nightshade there are fifty marigolds and harebells; where there is one cloud, thunder-charged, there are hundreds that stray across the heavens. Alas, that is an unwise man, an ungrateful man, an unfair man, an unphilosophic man, and, most of all, an unchristian man, who measures his life on earth by groans, and tears, and dyspeptic fit, and abuse, and scorn, and terror, and neuralgic thrust.

There are many people who estimate their life on earth by the amount of money they have accumulated. They say, "The year 1866, or 1870, or 1898 was wasted." Why? "Made no money." Now, it is all cant and insincerity to talk against money, as though it had no value. It may represent refinement, and education, and many blessed surroundings. It is the spreading of the table that feeds the children's hunger. It is the lighting of the furnace that keeps you warm. It is the making of the bed on which you rest from care and anxiety. It is the carrying of you at last to decent sepulcher, and the putting up of the slab on which is chiseled the story of your Christian hope. It is simply hypocrisy, this tirade in pulpit and lecture-hall against money. But while all this is so, he who uses money or thinks of money as anything but a means to an end will find out his mistake when the glittering treasures slip out of his nerveless grasp, and he goes out of this world without a shilling of money or a certificate of stock.

There are many—I wish there were more—who esti-

mate their life by their moral and spiritual development. It is not sinful egotism for a Christian man to say, "I am purer than I used to be. I have got over a great many of the bad habits in which I used to indulge. I am a great deal better man than I used to be." There is no sinful egotism in that. It is not base egotism for a soldier to say, "I know more about military tactics than I used to, before I took a musket in my hand and learned to 'present arms,' and when I was a pest to the drill-officer." It is not base egotism for a sailor to say, "I know better how to clew down the mizzen topsail than I used to, before I had ever seen a ship." And there is no sinful egotism when a Christian man, fighting the battles of the Lord, or, if you will have it, voyaging toward a haven of eternal rest, says, "I know more about spiritual tactics and about voyaging toward heaven than I used to."

There are many—and I wish there were more—who are estimating life by the good they can do. John Bradford said he counted that day nothing at all in which he had not, by pen or tongue, done some good.

I do not know what your advantages or disadvantages are; I do not know what your tact or talent is; I do not know what may be the fascination of your manners or the repulsiveness of them; but I know this: There is for you a field to cultivate, a harvest to reap, a tear to wipe away, a soul to save. This is a good day in which to begin a new style of measurement. "How old art thou?" .

THE END

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